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HISTORY

OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

1789—1795.

Vol. III.



HISTORY

OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD EDITION OF THE ORIGINAL GERMAN WORK,

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PREFACE.

For the present English Translation of the 3rd and 4th Volumes of his work the Author has been enabled to consult, in addition to the afore-mentioned sources, a large number of very important diplomatic papers contained in the Archives of Vienna, to which access has been granted him, with the most gratifying liberality, by the Imperial Chancellor Graf v. Beust, through the good offices of the Keeper of the Archives Herr v. Arneth.

The Author has had the satisfaction of finding his general views of events and persons confirmed by the contents of these most interesting documents; in many particulars, of course, his narrative has been improved and enriched by the opening of these fresh sources.

Bonn, December 1869.

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ERRATA.

Page	145,	line	10,	read: «For Aug. 25th» (instead of Aug. 20th).
»	409,	»	3,	» «his ministers Colloredo and Trautmannsdorf (Thugut followed somedays later)» (instead of Thugut and Trautmansdorf).
»	446,	»	6,	» «May 29th» (instead of 23th).
»	471,	»	19,	» «Ouessant» (instead of Quessant).

BOOK VII.

INTERRUPTION OF THE COALITION WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

THE GIRONDISTS BRING FORWARD THE DRAFT OF A NEW CONSTITUTION.—DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS IN PARIS—PLUNDERING ON THE 25TH OF FEB.—COMMUNISTIC PROGRAMME—FAVOURABLE CONDITION OF THE PROLETARIATE IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE WAR—DANTON DEMANDS THAT THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY THE CONVENTION.—EMEUTE OF THE 10TH OF MARCH. REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL.—DANTON AND THE GIRONDISTS—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY.—BOUCHOTTE MINISTER-AT-WAR.—PROHIBITION OF TRADE IN MONEY.

IT is very remarkable how exactly the two mighty forces which fill so prominent a place at the end of the 18th century —Russian imperialism and French democracy—ran parallel with one another. The death of the Emperor Leopold in March 1792, was to both the signal for action. During the summer, the one succeeded in conquering Poland, and the other in overthrowing the throne of the Bourbons. The fruits which the autumn yielded were, for Paris the repulse of the Prussian invasion, for St. Petersburg the first breach between the German Powers, and the final resolution of Prussia to join in the partition of Poland. The beginning of the year 1793, again, produced for Catharine the advantageous treaty of St. Petersburg, and for the Jacobins the triumph over all their domestic enemies, in the trial of Louis XVI. And lastly, while, in April, the Polish provinces were occupied without resistance by their oppressors, the Parisian party, though beaten in the field, forged a weapon for future victories in the Committee of Public Safety. We see how these two mighty streams, simultaneously swelling, beat against the dams of Central Europe; and we soon convince ourselves that this coincidence is not the work of

chance. While in other countries, personal liberty manifested in freedom of thought and security of property is the prevailing cry of the age, we have before us two Powers which unite all the resources of their subjects—their thoughts and wishes—their intellect and property—under an iron despotism, and lead them forth for the subjugation of the world. Europe would, indeed, have had strength enough to resist them both at once, if its leaders had appreciated the danger, and been united among themselves. But as the very contrary of this was the case it was natural that every mistake should redound to the equal advantage of both these formidable adversaries. The realm of modern freedom lost ground every month; until at last the billows of war, raised on the one side by Russian despotism, and on the other by French democracy, beat wildly over the whole of our quarter of the globe.

We have seen what prevented the Parisian Democrats from seizing the reins of government in France immediately after the execution of the king. But as they were in the possession of the actual power, as the majority in the Convention wavered between the two parties, as the ministry was an impotent phantom without unity or fixed principle of action—there existed nothing worthy of the name of government, and France, benumbed by the indolence of the great mass of the people, was fated to become the victim of the first audacious ravisher. The Gironde imagined that after the removal of Louis the time was come for the real work of the Convention—the drawing up of a new constitution—from the fulfilment of which they expected the restoration of their own power. As they had a majority in the committee appointed for this very purpose, Condorcet was able to bring forward a scheme as early as the 15th of February. The propositions contained in it were conceived entirely in the spirit of 1791, and were carried out to their remotest logical consequences—freedom for every State—freedom for every individual—freedom for every kind of labour and property.

In accordance with these principles he proposed the nomination of all officials and representatives by universal suffrage, in the smallest possible electoral districts—election of the cabinet council by the whole nation—and a guarantee of all the original and fundamental rights of man—in short, an ideal of a free constitution for ideal men. What it lacked was, a government strong enough to administer the laws, to protect the fundamental rights, and to punish evil-doers. The mistake of 1791 was repeated on a larger scale; and its repetition, at such a moment, is fatal to the reputation of the Gironde for political sagacity. The scheme met with the worst possible reception from public opinion. The Bourgeoisie, who now looked on all politics with disgust and horror, took scarcely any notice of it; while the Jacobins, who thoroughly understood the real nature of democracy, were furious at the treacherous scheme which hallowed the selfishness of the owners of property, and proclaimed equality of rights for *all* men, and consequently for aristocrats, capitalists, and all other enemies of freedom. "This system of election," said Thuriot, "favours the rich." "The constitution," cried Hassenfratz, "ought to contain regulations by which the people may rid itself of unfaithful representatives." "According to this plan" said Couthon, "the position of the ministers would be so strong, that the patriots would have a difficulty in ejecting them." They were angry, therefore, that Condorcet did not subject the richer classes, the ministers, and the representatives of the people, to the patriots—i. e. to the populace of the capital and their leaders. We see from this that the Jacobins did not understand the word democracy in its modern sense of equal rights for all men, but literally, as the sole and absolute rule of the *demos*,—of the poor over the rich. The Convention did not venture to come to an immediate decision, and its deliberations on the project dragged on so heavily, that three months were spent over the preamble—the "Rights of Man." The feebleness of the Gironde was displayed in the most glaring light.

Very different was the activity and success of their opponents, the Democrats. The plan of subjecting all the property and civilisation of France to their will, which they had first promulgated after the 10th of August, and again during the month of December, was now to be brought into full operation by the new ascendancy which this party had acquired through the trial and execution of the king. As the middle class in Paris kept entirely aloof from politics, the sectional assemblies were only attended by a handful of proletaries, who commenced their sittings late in the evening after work hours, and faithfully represented that sovereignty of the people, whose dicta—according to the doctrine of the Jacobins—were to be a binding law on the Convention. Care was taken that there should never be any want of orators or exciting themes of declamation: discussions were carried on till late in the night, on the worthlessness of the ministry and the Gironde—on the intrigues of the *Emigrés*, and the traitors at home—and above all, on the starvation of the poor, the hard-heartedness of the rich, and the means of exterminating usurers and monopolists. As many articles were made dear by the stagnation of trade and the mass of *assignats*, there was reason enough for complaint; and the exasperation was increased by the thought that goods existed in plenty, and that they only had a higher price put on them by the merchants, or were altogether withdrawn from the market, in consequence of the uncertain value of the paper money. And thus a fresh outcry was raised against their grinding selfishness and it was again demanded that the State should decree low and fixed prices, and punish those who refused to sell their goods. The word was passed from section to section; wherever any opposition showed itself it was immediately suppressed by a number of resolute *Fédérés;* and on the 12th of February the first of those storm-petitions—which were so terribly to characterize the year 1793—was presented to the Convention. Commissioners of the sections and the *Fédérés,* warmly supported by Marat,

demanded, in the first place, a fixed price for corn;[1] but they met with so unfavourable a reception from the majority, that the magnates of the Mountain thought good to disown them, and pretended to scent disguised aristocrats among them. The consequence was that for the present the chiefs kept themselves cautiously in the background, but that the movement assumed a form all the more unruly in the lower grades of the faction. As in October 1789, the women once more took the lead. While the washerwomen, infuriated by the dearness of soap, demanded the punishment of death for all *accapareurs* and accumulators of wares, the sister Jacobin Club of the *dames des Halles* and huckstresses, called for the equalization of the value of paper money and silver coin. To remove all doubt of the political connection of these demonstrations, 28 sections came to a resolution, on the same day, to demand from the Convention a vote of approval in favour of the September murderers. If patriotic murder was once formally legalised, the sovereign people would certainly possess the simplest means of making the property of the rich available for the public good.

The Municipality which formed, as in September, the centre of all these machinations, took care to procure, in addition to the agitation of the masses, more solid and trustworthy weapons. Their armed force—the old troops of the 10th of August and the 2d of September—the "*tape-durs*," "strike-hards," as the people of the Halles called these allied banditti—was now completely organized.[2] Their commander at this time was the clerk Maillard, dispenser of the popular justice in September, and formerly leader of the women in the march of October the 6th 1789. Through him the Commune sent

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[1] The price proposed was so extremely low, that modern democratic writers declare that the whole affair was got up by royalist *agens provocateurs*. They overlook the fact, that the very same tarif was demanded (and in some cases obtained,) four weeks later, by all the leading organs of the party.

[2] Conf. Mortimer-Ternaux, IV. 221.

their daily orders to the companies distributed through the metropolitan sections; at the head of which were their most trustworthy partisans, chiefly composed of needy adventurers of all nations, equally serviceable as sectional orators or street assassins. By the side of this revolutionary army, the Hotel de Ville possessed an equally revolutionary police in the sectional committees which had been formed during the trial of the king. These consisted of about a dozen men in each section, humble artisans of fiery patriotism, but without a particle of education or property, who in virtue of their innate sovereignty, issued summonses, distraints, and orders of arrest, at the beck of the Commune, and under the powerful protection of Maillard. The Municipality had by these means established its authority in Paris on a firm foundation, and its connection with the clubs enabled it to extend its influence to the Departments also. Jacobin clubs existed in almost all the towns, and as in these too, as well as in Paris, the Bourgeoisie had given way before them in the sections, the Jacobins had the complete control over the election of town-councillors. They were, moreover, always ready to follow the instructions received from the capital, to collect money and armed men, and get up violent petitions. And since they sent reports to Paris of their own local-troubles, and especially of the resistance they experienced from the departmental authorities, which were under the influence of the higher classes, we can easily understand how the Parisian Democrats naturally conceived the idea of a polity, in which France should be ruled by a number of despotic communal councils, under the direction of the Municipality of Paris, for the advantage of the proletaries. To abolish the departmental councils, and to invest the communes with all the powers of government, were the first steps in this direction.

For the present, however, these armaments and recruitings cost very considerable sums, which the Municipality, until, they had attained their grand objects, could only procure

from the Convention. At the beginning of February, therefore, they begged permission to raise 4,000,000 francs, by a progressive tax upon the rich, for the purpose, as they alleged, of buying corn; and the restless proletaries were not a little pleased by the prospect of both a progressive scale of taxation, and a public distribution of bread. The Convention did not dare to refuse, and not only decreed the tax, but themselves advanced one million of it on the spot. But this was by no means sufficient. When the Convention, on the 24th, received the demands of the women, and in consequence of their unruly conduct made the Municipality answerable for the public peace, the latter asserted the absolute necessity of larger advances to be spent in alms and the purchase of bread. The Convention referred the matter to a committee, and showed little inclination to bestow new marks of favour of that kind. Whereupon Marat had bills printed during the night and distributed in the early morning of the 25th, which pointed out to the people that by plundering a few magazines, and hanging a few usurers, they might easily minister to their own necessities. In conformity with this summons, a thorough and complete clearance of shops of every kind was begun about 8 o'clock by a mob of women and disguised men, who began, indeed, by demanding low prices, but soon proceeded to plunder without any payment at all. At first the cry was raised for the necessaries of life, —for coffee, rice, and sugar; but in a short time the crowd seized on everything within their reach—wearing materials, grocery, valuables and dainties. The rioters poured through the streets without resistance, shouting and yelling, and hour after hour passed by, before the authorities gave any sign even of their existence. Garat, the minister of the interior, was the first to point out to the Convention the real object of the movement, by saying that the great question of the necessaries of life had again to be considered; that the Commune could easily restore order, but that for this purpose it needed further advances. It was then about 2 o'clock, and

it was not until this time—six hours after the commencement of the pillage—that the Municipality met, and for decency's sake issued an order to the National Guard to interfere. Even then they sent, in the first place, to the more democratic sections, where the call to arms by roll of drum produced no effect at all.[1] When, soon afterwards, several of the plundered citizens made their complaint to the Hotel de Ville, a priest named Roux declared, amid the applause of the galleries, that the shopkeepers were only giving back to the people what they had hitherto robbed them of; upon which the Municipality proceeded with the "order of the day," and the plundering bands with their work of rapine. At last, at 5 o'clock, the Convention reluctantly came to the conclusion that there was no other means of staying the tumult than yielding to the demands of the Municipality, and buying off the maltreated citizens by an instalment of money from the treasury. They therefore made a further advance of 3,000,000, and subsequently 4,000,000 for the succeeding months. On receipt of this weighty intelligence, the scene in the Municipality was changed; orders were sent into all the sections to sound the alarm, and in most of the streets the plundering ceased. But the rioters were even now pursued with so little vigour, that they were able to commit fresh acts of violence during the whole of the night. In the morning it appeared that 1200 shops and magazines had been gutted, belonging almost exclusively to constitutional members of the National Guard; while the property of the Jacobin tradesmen had been spared.[2] The Municipality had attained their object without trouble and without danger; the impotence of all other authorities had been more palpably displayed than ever, and after this complete victory, the Commune no longer scrupled to come

[1] Three others complained in the evening that the orders had not reached them until 7 o'clock. *Minutes of the Commune.* — [2] Tallien in the Jacobin Club, Feb. 26. *Révol. de Paris,* March 9. Gorsas, *Courier,* March 9.

forward openly with its communistic programme. In the first place, their procureur, Chaumette, appeared before the bar of the Convention, on the 3rd of March, to demand a prohibition of all money-dealing, and the adoption of measures against corn usurers. Then the *Fédérés*, on the 4th, worked in the same direction by a demonstration in the form of a fulminating address, in which they demanded before all things the heads of the Girondists, and moreover declared open war against the possessors of property. "The moneyed aristocracy," they said, "are striving to raise themselves on the ruins of the noblesse; almost all the richer merchants and capitalists are usurers; let us do away with the constitution which is calculated to favour the rich and to injure the people; we can then march against the crowned tyrants of Europe with overwhelming force.

It is evident that if, in accordance with these demands, the buyers up of goods *(accapareurs)* were suppressed—i. e. the immediate sale of wares rendered compulsory; and further, if, as the women proposed, the price of all articles, and, as the Commune demanded, the value of paper money, were once for all fixed by law—the Government would be enabled by an unlimited issue of *assignats* to take possession of all the property in France, and bestow it at their pleasure upon their faithful proletaries. It was the most comprehensive attack on the rights of property, as far as our historical knowledge reaches, which was ever made in Western Europe; an attack made in the heart of a great and civilized nation, and one which was not confined to the brains of a few idle dreamers, but practically carried out in all its terrible consequences. It was made with fiery fanaticism and unbridled passion, and yet with systematic calculation. Its originators—victorious at home and abroad—were perfectly free in their deliberations, and did not adopt their measures under the pressure of necessity or despair, but from deliberate choice. For, at the end of February, when they proclaimed this unexampled tyranny to their fellow-

citizens, Dumourlez had possession of the old imperial city, Aix-la-Chapelle, and was destroying one Dutch fortress after another; the most brilliant prospects of victory and booty were opened out in every direction, and nowhere was there any danger which could give rise to angry excitement. On the contrary, the war had hitherto essentially improved the material condition of the proletariate, and thereby removed all possible excuse for such a system of robbery.[1] These are facts of universal significance, on which we ought to fix our attention all the more earnestly, because they have been disregarded, although they are fraught with the most important consequences.

Before the beginning of the war, indeed, the working classes had suffered much more from the financial consequences of the Revolution than the possessors of property. The price of all the necessaries of life had been enhanced by the *assignats* and the stagnation of business; and in consequence of the small demand for labour, wages, if not lower, remained nearly the same as before. This was the case in the summer of 1792. But when the war assumed larger and larger dimensions—when thousands upon thousands hastened to join the army—when, in February 1793, orders were given to raise 300,000 men,—a sudden change took place. Labourers of every kind became scarce, and the rate of wages necessarily rose to an unexampled height. The effect of the war was further increased by the growing anarchy which opened to the idle rabble the prospect of revolutionary booty, and spared them the necessity of seeking work. Thus

[1] It will be seen that here, as in the case of the September massacres, we arrive at the very opposite conclusion to that which has been maintained, more especially by *Thiers;* according to which the want and hardship occasioned by the war were the cause of all the crimes and excesses of the Revolution. It is from this view, as we know, that the utterly unfounded notion has arisen that the war was excited by the Coalition: this view of the matter is as utterly false in the subsequent course, as in the commencement, of the Revolution.

the wages of unskilled workmen rose from 15 or 18 to 40 sous; and those of an artisan from 26 or 30 to 70 or 80 sous, i. .e. to double, or even triple, the former rate. As to the cost of living, it is true that meat, fuel, and candles were also dearer. Beef, for example, formerly 8,. was now 20 sous, and tallow, formerly 12, was now 30 sous a pound; but bread, the chief food of French workmen, thanks to the colossal contributions of the treasury, was as usual 3 sous in Paris, and on an average 6 sous in the Departments. Every where wages had risen in price much more than the necessaries of life, and consequently the condition of the French workman was better than it had ever been.

The position of the capitalists, on the other hand, had deteriorated exactly in the same proportion. The war with Germany in 1792, as has been observed, destroyed the prosperity of French manufactures; and now the English war entirely ruined the trade with foreign countries. The evil was the more sensibly felt when the Democrats, on the 1st of March, made use of their influence in the Convention to pass a decree, which threatened all goods fabricated in an enemy's country—no matter to whom they had subsequently belonged, —with confiscation. This measure was a heavier blow to neutral trade than any previous legislative act, and was the commencement of that long series of prohibitions and reprisals, which culminated in the Continental system and the annihilation of all neutrality, in the reign of Napoleon I. Other consequences of the war pressed with equal weight on agriculture. While the roads were allowed to fall into decay, from the absence of all regular administration, the army withdrew an ever-increasing number of horses and oxen from the farms. The rise in the rate of wages kept pace with the increasing dearness of agricultural implements; and in short, the cost of production was enhanced in every respect, at the very same time that the Parisian Democrats were clamouring more and more loudly for a compulsory lowering of the price of corn.

This state of affairs teaches us several important lessons. It proves that the offensive measures taken at this period by the French Democrats against their fellow-citizens and the Powers of Europe, were adopted from deliberate choice. Their enmity against property did not spring from unavoidable necessity, but partly from idleness and love of pleasure, partly from the blind self-conceit of popular sovereignty, which made its possessors think themselves too good to earn their bread in the sweat of their brows. The scheme for the subjugation of the possessors of property, which was completed during the victorious progress of the French in Holland, was not adopted as a means of saving the country from foreign enemies. On the contrary, it was in the interest of the Democrats to perpetuate the foreign war, which gave a larger military force to the government, higher wages to the workmen, and afforded to both the prospect of booty of incalculable value. No one dreamt of the possible overthrow of the French armies on the frontiers, and when, nevertheless, they were defeated, the same scenes were enacted as in September; men thought far less of defending themselves from dangers which they hardly recognised as serious, than of turning the disasters to account as means of exciting the masses, and annihilating the moderate party.

On the 5th of March the first intelligence of the loss of Aix-la-Chapelle reached Paris. Robespierre forthwith demanded in the Convention, that all the aristocratic officers should be put to death, and in the Jacobin club, that all the venomous journalists should be branded; and Desfieux added a motion for a new revolutionary tribunal to exterminate all traitors. The Hotel de Ville eagerly adopted all these propositions, and a tumultuous cry was raised in the sections against the conspirators, reactionists and rich egoists. Marat meanwhile wrote about the palpable treachery of the generals, whom, he said, Beurnonville foolishly and disgracefully took under his protection. "No indeed," cried

the section *du Louvre*, "the Ministers are not to be trusted." "The poor soldiers," said the section *de l'Oratoire*, "who are led out by their officers to be butchered!" "The people," said Robespierre to the section *Bonne Nouvelle*, "must arm themselves for the war, while we are crushing intrigues at home." The waves of popular commotion again ran high, as they had done after the 10th of August. All the factions of the democratic party were set in motion, and without any definite plan of operations rushed forward in wild confusion, seeking to outstrip each other in the headlong race; Robespierre aiming above all things at the legal annihilation of his opponents, and the Municipality at communistic booty for themselves and their mob. Maillard and his followers—among whom Fournier, the leader of the last butchery at Versailles, and a stately dissipated Pole, Lazowski, distinguished themselves—were active in every quarter, and exhorted the people not to hesitate or make many words, but to take the matter into their own hands as on the 10th of August, and destroy the traitors *in flagrante delicto*. Just at this moment Danton arrived from Belgium, and threw a new proposition, fraught with vast results, into the boiling caldron of popular passions. He was bound by all his reminiscences, tastes and connexions, to the popular factions, by whose deeds of violence he had risen to power. But his short term of office had sufficed to awaken in him the statesman's sense of order and conservatism, and at the same time to change his former opinion of his old friends of the Hôtel de Ville into one of unmixed and lasting contempt. He plainly saw that what France wanted, both in her domestic and foreign affairs, was a dictatorship. It seemed to him childish, in the face of countless dangers, to be still talking of liberty instead of military rule; and he thought nothing of any moment but the warding off of foreign invasion. He had never possessed either political or moral principles, and in the present dead-lock of domestic affairs, especially, all systems seemed to him equally good or equally

bad, and he was ready to join any party which could bring intellect, zeal, and energy, to the all important task of the moment—the deliverance of the country from its foreign enemies. On the very first day after his arrival, therefore, he rushed to the rostra to advocate the necessity of a strong national government, which should unite all the revolutionary parties, all the resources of the land, and all the powers of the state:—in short the direct rule of the Legislative Assembly itself, in the persons of the leaders of the Convention. These words contain the fatal catastrophe of all the previous revolutionary efforts. The unbridled freedom of 1789 had brought itself and the country to the edge of the precipice; to preserve her existence, France now threw herself into the arms of unlimited despotism!

At the first moment Danton's proposition excited an almost speechless astonishment. The constitutional division of authority was still deeply rooted in the minds of many; and both the Girondists, and the partisans of the Hotel de Ville, were particularly unwilling to invest the Convention with absolute power—the former because they wished to reconstruct it by means of the primary electors, and the latter because they intended to control it by the help of their proletaries. But the force of circumstances irresistibly urged them on. In the first place, Danton and Robespierre came to an understanding with one another. Even the latter was disgusted with the greedy, disorderly, and utterly unmanageable proceedings of the Hotel de Ville; and he thought that if he could but crush the Girondists, he could found his own supremacy by the help of the Convention, better than by that of the Hotel de Ville. He therefore demanded above all things a criminal tribunal, in order to secure for every emergency a weapon against the Gironde. As soon, therefore, as he had received ready assurances of support from Danton, he immediately came forward as his ally to advocate the establishment of a Conventional Government. The Mountain and a large section of the Centre followed the two

allied chiefs; the impetuous fury of the Parisian populace carried others with it, and on the 9th of March they succeeded in laying the foundation of their grand scheme. The Convention decreed that 82 deputies should be sent into the Departments for the avowed purpose of accelerating the recruitment of troops in every possible way; but in reality to stifle all opposition on the part of the provinces to the new democratic dictatorship. This intention was shown from the very first in the selection of commissioners. "No *appellants* [1] must be chosen," cried Collot d'Herbois; and so thoroughly was the Convention intimidated, that they caused the president to proclaim *en bloc*, without any opposition, the list drawn up by the Mountain, consisting exclusively of the names of the most thorough-paced and unscrupulous patriots. The Commune, at the same time, came in for its share of good things; the Convention laying down the principle that a fresh war tax ought to be laid upon the rich for the promotion of patriotic armaments.

On the following day—the 10th—according to Robespierre's wish, the motion for a new revolutionary tribunal was brought forward. It had been drawn up by Robert Lindet, a friend of Robespierre, in the simplest form, and was to the effect that nine men should be appointed, and empowered, without any assistance from a jury, or any fixed forms of procedure, to condemn all seducers of the people to death. Such a tribunal would hold the life, not only of every private person, but of every member of the Convention, in its hands; and this was the main object which Robespierre had in view. So atrocious a measure, however, in spite of all the threats of the Mountain, and the officious zeal of the Centre, could not but call forth a storm of indignation; a furious debate was carried on for hours, and an open breach in the Convention seemed unavoidable. The subordinate agents of the Mountain deemed that the time for the em-

[1] Those who in the king's tral had advocated the appeal to the people.

ployment of brute violence was now come. On the evening before, Fournier and Lazowski had proposed to the Jacobin and Cordéliers' clubs respectively, and these, again, during the night, to some of the sections, the immediate murder of the Girondists and the ministers. Without any direct instructions from their chiefs, they now united their bands at a patriotic carousal, and proceeded as soon as it grew dark with a noisy crowd to the Jacobin Club to induce them to join *en masse* in the deed of violence. It is said, with great probability, though absolute proofs are wanting, that the friends of Philip of Orleans were at work on this occasion, in the hope of placing him at the head of the Republic in the midst of the general confusion. It is certain that opposition to the bloody scheme was raised in the Jacobin Club, that a long and furious tumult took place, and that at last Danton's friend, Dubois-Crancé, induced the Club to refuse its participation. The bands then withdrew, and were soon afterwards dispersed by a torrent of rain, still more effectually than by a battalion of Brest *Fédérés* which was called out against them. When order had been gradually restored in the streets, the debate in the Convention was at last brought to a conclusion. The erection of the tribunal was indeed decreed, but the nature of the offences which were to be brought before it was more accurately defined, and it was determined that juries should be appointed to decide upon the facts of every case. What was still more important for the moment, the Convention reserved to itself the right of impeachment in each particular case. Thus, while the sword was sharpened for the neck of the refractory in the provinces, Robespierre's immediate object—the establishment of an independent power for the overthrow of the Gironde—was frustrated. As the latter, therefore, still retained their former position and influence in the Convention, Robespierre looked coldly on the plan of a conventional government.

The result was that Danton strove all the more zealously

to form connexions with the other parties—with the Hôtel de Ville, the Centre, and the Right, in turn. It would answer no purpose to enter into the particulars of these secret and hasty conferences; the important point—the general relation of the parties and their chiefs—is sufficiently known from other sources. All parties agreed that it was before all things necessary, in the present critical state of affairs, to appease the hot-headed rabble of the capital. In the absence of ready money, bills were given them on the future; on the 18th, the Convention, on the motion of Barère, laid down the principle of the proletary's right to work—progressive taxation on the rich—and the division of the communal lands among the poor of Paris. No opposition was made, although the State, by the first of these propositions, guaranteed the earnings of all labourers; by the second, laid claim to all private property beyond a certain sum; and by the third, arbitrarily disposed of many millions' worth of other people's land. With the same facility the Convention passed another law of no less importance, on the 21st; by which committees of twelve citizens were ordered to be elected by universal suffrage in every town or city district, for the purpose of exercising a surveillance over strangers. At present this was nothing more than the legal recognition of the hole-and-corner clubs which existed in the sections of Paris, and which henceforward, under the lofty title of revolutionary committees, subjected both natives and foreigners, with the same shameless tyranny, to the control of their police.

Meanwhile Danton's efforts had succeeded so far, that a personal conference of party chiefs was held about the middle of the month, at which he recommended a general reconciliation, and mutual forgiving and forgetting. But at the very commencement of the meeting, the long-cherished hatred between the Gironde and Robespierre broke out with such violence, that the latter left the room with contemptuous hauteur. Guadet more especially—who knew how to humble and embitter, but not to subdue or gain over an opponent—

treated Danton also with pitiless severity; so that this first conference broke up without any immediate result. The negotiation, however, was not entirely given up. It appears that, besides these men of the rostra, Danton wished to gain over Dumouriez, as a military support in case of need. At any rate this was the very time in which he once more hurried to Belgium, in order to prevent an open breach between that general and the Convention. Immediately after his return, he came to a preliminary understanding with the Gironde, which immediately led, on the 25th of March, to the first decree of the Convention respecting the future form of the Government.

The majority still hesitated to take direct possession of the reins of government; and they contented themselves with decreeing the election of a committee from the Convention itself, to keep watch over ministers. This committee was to consist of 25 members, was itself to transact no business, and all its meetings were to be open to the other deputies. These provisions all tend to show the almost invincible distrust of the different parties towards one another, and were of a nature to render all speedy, energetic, and orderly administration simply impossible. Still a shape had been found for the future government, and the first step towards its realisation taken. The election of the Twenty-five took place on the following day, and indicated in the clearest manner the grouping of the different parties. While Robespierre could hardly reckon with certainty on a single supporter, the Gironde had nine adherents, and Danton could boast of four avowed followers of his own, and nine almost equally trustworthy members of the Centre. In this position of affairs every thing depended on the question, whether the new alliance between Danton and the Gironde had any vitality in it, and strength enough to meet and subdue its foes. It was quickly put to the test!

The success of the Girondists was a signal to the more zealous Jacobins, to Robespierre and the Parisian Democrats,

for an open declaration of war against the new committee. All the fair promises of the 18th—the revolutionary committees, and the revolutionary tribunal—appeared to them illusory, worthless, and even dangerous, if their deadly enemies held possession of the highest position in the government. They meditated an immediate resort to violence, before the new committee was firmly fixed in office, and before the popular excitement had subsided. As early as the evening of the 25th an orator in the Jacobin club proposed to disarm the Girondists and other opponents, "with a reservation," he said, "of all further measures." The Club eagerly signified their assent, and on the 26th one of the Parisian sections demanded of the Convention, that the revolutionary committees should be empowered to disarm all nobles, priests, and suspected persons. The first intelligence of Dumouriez's threatened defection arriving just at this crisis tended to inflame men's minds, and aided the Mountain in carrying the decree. Thereupon Paris resounded with police alarms. One section drove out all the quondam nobles from their district on the 28th; on the following morning the gates were closed, the houses searched, and a number of persons arrested. At the same time a cry was raised in the sections for the formation of a people's army, by which was meant the payment of Maillard's troops from the treasury, and the arming, on an increased scale, of trustworthy Sansculottes for the service of the Revolution at home. The agitation and terror of the citizens was boundless, for it was just in this way that the September massacres had been preluded. In the same way as on that occasion, the sections presented a petition to the Convention on the 28th, calling upon them to summon the people to the rescue of their country; in the same way as in September, a so-called "central committee of the public weal" assembled to discuss the particulars of the plan for the intended outrage. This body consisted chiefly of the subordinate tools of the democratic party—the leaders of

the "tape-durs," and other congenial murderers, most of them in the pay of the Commune, and all devoted admirers of Marat and Robespierre. There were also among them some Cordéliers of Danton's retinue, who still saw in him the hero of the 2nd of September, who would not even hear of any dictator but him, and immediately got into a violent and jealous dispute with their colleagues on this very point.

Up to this time Danton had secured his position on all sides. While he secretly made the fairest promises to the Gironde, he charmed the galleries by thundering declamations in favour of liberty, and extravagant, high-sounding proposals—e. g. to present every Frenchman with a pike, and to declare every reactionist an outlaw—proposals which from their very monstrosity could have no practical application. His position, however, became every day more critical and disagreeable; he already saw himself suspected by the armed mob whose idol he had been, whilst the last weapon—the Belgian army—which he might have used against them, had been wrested from him by the defection of Dumouriez. His convictions continued to be on the side of the Gironde, but the real power was evidently in the hands of the Parisian party. He remained, therefore, in a state of uncertainty and irresolution, incapable of coming to any definite decision. Meanwhile the fatal blow was dealt by the Girondists themselves.

We have seen with what hesitation and reserve the latter had made up their minds to an alliance with their despised and dreaded opponent. No sooner had the compact between them been made, than the storm which raged every day more and more threateningly in the streets of Paris broke out. Intelligence arrived respecting Dumouriez which awakened afresh the reminiscences of Danton's doings in Belgium; and the fatal idea entered the minds of the Girondists that Danton had meditated treachery from the very first, and that he would use the new powers of the Committee of Public Safety, in alliance with Dumouriez, to attack the Convention itself. The im-

possibility of his entertaining such an intention would have become apparent on the slightest consideration; but, irritated and harassed as they were, they did not deliberate at all, but only rejoiced in finding in Dumouriez's treachery a popular weapon against the leader of the September massacre. On the same day on which the committee of insurrection assembled in the episcopal palace, Lasource stood up in the Convention to charge Danton, in a cutting and violent speech, of complicity with Dumouriez's treasonable intrigues against his country. As matters stood, this was a deadly attack, proceeding from the very midst of the newly-formed alliance; and considering his former relations with Dumouriez, and the hostility of the Jacobins, Danton was in no small danger. Yet he restrained his feelings for a considerable time, exhorted his assailants to peace, and reminded them of their late reconciliation. But his enemies, forgetting that Danton could still reckon on the Mountain as long as he did not himself disown it, were not to be diverted from their purpose, and only redoubled their attack. Then, at last, he returned to his former courses, and in a long and passionate declamation threw down the gauntlet, and challenged his enemies to the contest of life and death. The Left shouted in triumph as they listened to the thunders of their old chief, and saw the Danton of September once more at their head. And when at the conclusion of his speech, he cried out that he would take his stand in the citadel of reason, and crush his enemies to powder with the artillery of truth, the charges against him fell to the ground amidst thunders of enthusiastic applause.

It was now all over with the Committee of twenty-five —with the hope of raising the Gironde to power by the aid of Danton. The Democrats, once more united, and therefore secure of the Convention, immediately adjourned the armed revolt, and disowned the conspirators of the episcopal palace. All the more comprehensive were their measures in the Convention itself. In the first place several decrees were

passed in accordance with Robespierre's views. The Revolutionary tribunal was empowered to proceed against the representatives of the people, ministers, and generals, in virtue of an impeachment by the Convention; but against all other persons at its own discretion. The commissioners in the Departments received full powers to deprive every reactionist of his office, and to incarcerate him without further examination. Marat and Danton then agreed mutually to minister to each other's desires. The former proposed, according to Danton's wish, the establishment of an absolute government; and the latter agreed to support the communistic plans of the Hôtel de Ville. The Girondists, with impotent rage, saw themselves overwhelmed by the flood, and the Centre completely subjugated by the Mountain. On the representation of Marat, that it was absurd to talk of freedom and and constitution, when the question was one of contest and power, the Committee of twenty-five received orders, on the 3rd of April, to report on the means of establishing a more efficient government. On the following day the Girondist Isnard had to bring up the report in the name of the committee. Buzot violently opposed it, but Barère, Thuriot, and Marat united in repelling his attack. On the 5th, therefore, it was resolved to institute a Committee of Public Safety, consisting of nine members, for one month, which should debate with closed doors, stimulate and watch the ministers, and, when necessary, suspend their orders. It was likewise empowered to make resolutions of immediate efficacy. The nine members were chosen at once; they were Danton and his intimate friends Lacroix and Guyton-Morveau, and six compliant members of the Centre; Barère, Cambon, Delmas, Breard, Treilhard and Debry. When the latter declined to serve, his place was supplied by a still stauncher partisan—Robert Lindet.

Here, we see, the Parisian party gave Danton free scope; its own attention was directed to other quarters, and Danton, on the evening of the same day (the 5th), gave them a solid

guarantee of his intention to support them. The Convention, on his motion, passed three decrees; 1st, that a people's guard, or, as Lacroix more precisely expressed it, an army of Sansculottes, should be formed. 2ndly, that the price of bread should be regulated by the rate of wages; and 3dly, that the requisite expenses should be borne by the rich. It is true that these decrees had no immediate practical effect;—for the guard must first be formed, the proper price of bread ascertained, and the rate of taxation on the wealthy determined:—but the deep significance of the recognition of such principles as these must have been clear to every one. It was an additional satisfaction to Robespierre that a resolution was passed, on the 6th, for the apprehension of all Bourbons still living in France, and especially of Philip Egalité, who since the 10th of March had been an object of great suspicion. Marat, who was even now loth to part with his old friend and benefactor, was richly compensated by the appointment of Colonel Bouchotte to the ministry at war, who immediately renewed all the abuses of Pache's ministry—the friendship with the Hôtel de Ville, the persecution of the officers, and the incitement of the soldiers to mutiny. On the 8th it was decreed, with the same ends in view, that in the military department only *assignats* should be used, in order to spare the treasury the expense of the premium on silver, which had amounted during the last quarter to not less than 61 million francs.[1] But that the soldiers might not starve, a prohibition of all trading in money was added on the 11th: henceforward no one

[1] 24 in the money market at Paris, and 37 in foreign countries, according to the monthly accounts in the imperial archives in Paris. Unfortunately the far greater number of these accounts appear to have been lost. They still existed at the end of 1797 (Ramel, *Etat des Finances en l'an IX*), but in 1853 they were to be found neither in the *Dépôts de Finances*, the *Cour de comptes*, nor in the imperial archives.

might ask more *assignats* for his silver money than the nominal worth of each, on pain of six years' imprisonment in irons. This was the first application of the system of forced currency to private traffic; it was quite certain that what was acknowledged to be legal in respect to silver, would soon become equally so in the case of corn, and finally of all property whatsoever.

CHAPTER II.

WAR AND DIPLOMACY IN APRIL AND MAY.

AUSTRIA'S POSITION IN RESPECT TO THE AFFAIRS OF POLAND.—RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA CONTROL THE ELECTIONS TO THE POLISH DIET.—AUSTRIAN NOTE AGAINST PRUSSIA—BREACH BETWEEN THE TWO POWERS.—PAUSE IN WARLIKE OPERATIONS—DANTON'S DIPLOMACY.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH SWEDEN.—TREATY.—CUSTINE'S PLAN OF LEADING THE MOSELLE ARMY TO BELGIUM.—DESPORTES ENTRUSTED WITH A PRUSSO-BAVARIAN NEGOTIATION.—SCHEME FOR SECULARISING THE SPIRITUAL ELECTORATES.—TEMPORARY TRUCE AT MAYENCE.

THE new French government was more especially intent on remodelling its relations with foreign countries. The government itself was in fact the offspring of this tendency, and felt its deep importance at every step it took. With a thorough indifference, therefore, to home politics, it applied itself with eager zeal to the questions of its foreign policy. No doubt, had it been left to its own resources,—to its own wisdom and its own passions—it would have perished before it had had time to develop even the first part of its system. But it so happened, that at the very time when the French were suffering the greatest disasters—at the time of Custine's flight and Dumouriez's desertion—victorious Europe paused in its career. The grand alliance was on the point of dissolution; it allowed its enemies to escape from beneath the sword, and the parties who formed it were animated by scarcely any other feeling than suppressed, and therefore doubly bitter, hatred towards one another.

It was still the Polish question which prevented the breach between the German powers from being healed. The occupation of Poland by Russian and Prussian troops had taken

place in defiance of the representations of Austria: all that remained to do was to wrest from the remnant of the Polish state the formal recognition of the *fait accompli*; and it was at this point that the two partitioning Powers on the one side, eagerly pushing on towards full fruition, and Austria, on the other, restraining and delaying them, came into direct and violent collision. As early as the 9th of April—two days after the publication of the Russian manifesto—Sievers and Buchholtz handed in the declarations of their respective courts to the assembled Confederation in Grodno. The servile members, who formed a decided majority of the Confederation, were prepared, and the streets were occupied by patrols of Cossacks to prevent the assembly from separating without having come to a formal resolution. After the retirement of the ambassadors a very violent debate arose. One member after another declared that he would never sanction the dismemberment of his country, and never vote for the convocation of a diet whose office was to be the cession of provinces. With loud cries they reminded the Confederation of the oath which it had taken at its establishment under Russian protection, to preserve the inviolability of the Polish territories; and after the first excitement had subsided, it was resolved to send a message to Sievers, as protector of the Confederation, begging him to wait for the arrival of the king, and meanwhile to allow them to send a petition to St. Petersburg. The brief answer was returned, that such steps would be unavailing, because the understanding between the three courts was beyond all doubt; and that they must inevitably proceed to issue writs for the assembling of the diet.

Among these mere clients and hirelings of Catharine there had never, of course, been any serious thought of resistance to her commands. They were, indeed, surprised that Russia, which only a year before had made the most brilliant promises to the Confederation, should now, without any cause of dissatisfaction with the Poles, proceed to the partition of

their country. Felix Potocki, especially, who had hoped by the aid of Russia to make himself king of Poland, was thoroughly crushed and desperate. The majority of his colleagues, however, thronged as usual round the Russian ambassador with petitions for pensions, maintenance money, and appointments; and their only object in protracting the proceedings, both now and afterwards, was to indulge their very genuine hatred against Prussia, and to save their dignity, in some degree, in the eyes of Europe. For this reason they kept recurring to their oaths, which rendered it impossible to them to convoke a diet. Sievers, who heartily despised them all, and would have preferred to dissolve the Confederation without further ceremony, at length adopted the expedient of restoring in the first place the so-called "Standing council"—which, as a portion of the former constitution, had been abolished in 1790—and leaving all further proceedings to this body, which had the legal right of summoning the diet. A meeting of this assembly was indispensably necessary, even independently of the partition, since now that the constitution of May 1791 was abolished, some steps must necessarily be taken with respect to the future form of government.

Meanwhile King Stanislaus, who, according to Sievers' orders, had started from Warsaw for Grodno, was lying ill, as was alleged, in the middle of his journey, at Bialystock. He was in the most miserable position—without money, friends, or influence—suspected as an opponent by all parties, and subjected by the Russian ambassador to the most harassing surveillance. With bitter tears he several times supplicated Sievers for permission to lay down his crown; but the latter, always polite and friendly, gave a decided refusal, because he needed a royal signature for the treaty of cession. Yet even this feeble king still possessed weapons by which he could cause delay and vexation to the conquerors at every step. He saw how grievously his oppressors were alarmed by the increasing opposition of Austria, how greatly the in-

fluence of the Emperor in Europe had been increased by his Belgian victories; he saw the state of irritation into which the ambassadors had fallen, and that Buchholtz, especially, seemed to have no other thought than how he might bring the matter to some conclusion or other, without much caring what. The king, therefore, took the greatest delight in bringing everything to a standstill by his own inaction. He secretly entered into correspondence with the refugees of 1791 (who had found a hospitable reception in Vienna and Dresden), although they entertained no other feeling towards him than utter contempt, and regarded the Targowicians with deadly hatred. He likewise came to an understanding with some of the latter, especially with Vice-Marshal Walewski, and the Second-General Rzewuski, who warmed up afresh the opposition to Sievers' late demands. While they daily threw new obstacles in the way of the appointment of the Standing council, the Confederation, at their instigation, resolved on sending a polite answer to Sievers, apparently complying with his wishes. With regard to Prussia, however, they at first returned no answer at all, and at last only sent an energetic protest to Sievers against the Prussian claims.

There was one consideration in the mind of Catharine, with which these proceedings of the Poles completely harmonised. It was only with reluctance that she had admitted the Prussians to a corner of the Polish soil; and having done so she was all the more firmly determined to allow Prussia no share in the government of Poland, but from her lofty and dominant position to regulate the affairs of the Prussian conquest, as well as that of Russia. The Polish proposition favourably coincided with these sentiments; but, as the Confederation might easily have seen, the time was not come for Russia to throw off the mask. As long as Sievers had not succeeded in bringing his own affairs to a complete settlement, he advocated the cause of Prussia as his own. In his affable way, indeed, he allowed the Poles to

indulge their oratory for weeks, but he then brought them back to their due submissiveness by a few brief commands which admitted of no resistance. When, after his first directions, they still adhered to their protest, he ordered Walewski, Rzewuski, and their adherents, to leave the Generality, and threatened, in case of their refusal, to send them to Siberia for having insulted his august mistress. Being in doubt as to how far he was in earnest, they still hesitated with their recantation; whereupon Sievers wrote to the king, on the 14th of April, that no one desired the welfare of Poland more than himself, but that a few insolent and crazy men were crossing all his efforts; that, the day before, he had wished to free Grodno from the heavy expense of having soldiers quartered upon it, but that in consequence of the protest he was not able to carry out his purpose; that, the day before, he had given orders to General Igelström to pay the provinces the cost of maintaining the Russian troops, but that he must revoke those orders until writs had been issued for a diet; that, in case of continued obstinacy, he should be compelled to stop the navigation on the rivers, to break up all the Polish regiments, and to postpone the settlement of the king's debts. When even these threats were of no avail, Sievers subjected the estates of Rzewuski and Walewski, on the one hand, and the possessions of the refugees, on the other, to military occupation; and thus the originators and the destroyers of the constitution of 1791 saw themselves persecuted with equal severity; and after this blow they all yielded with officious celerity. A note to Prussia was agreed upon, identical with the one addressed to Rassia; the Standing council was formed of persons named by Sievers;[1] and the writs for the elections to the Diet drawn up at once. With regard to the writs

[1] In regard to these persons Igelström wrote to Sievers on the 30th of April: "I can understand that you are obliged to cut arrows from every kind of wood, but a Zaluski (Sievers had nominated him on Igelström's recommendation) cannot pull together with a Wikoffski, a Walicki, a Rad-

the chancellor and Sievers agreed that the Standing council might, for decency's sake, send them into the severed provinces also, but that the postmasters on the borders should destroy them, and no further mention be made of them. Immediately afterwards Rzewuski and Walewski came to the all-powerful ambassador to assure him of their good intentions, and received back their sequestrated estates. The elections began in all the palatinates without any opposition, under the superintendence of the Russian garrisons, the officers of which only admitted electors and candidates after receiving distinct promises from them; and in many cases they named the deputies without further ceremony. General Igelström, who managed this affair, displayed, as Buchholtz reported, a rare experience and an incredible activity; and Sievers was able to announce to his sovereign that not a single voice would be heard in the Diet adverse to the interests of Russia. They did not disdain, by the way, to put whatever Polish troops or recruits they could lay hold of into Russian regiments; and the number of those who were thus incorporated had risen at the end of April to 14,500.[1]

Matters in Poland, therefore, stood as favourably for Russia as possible. But her position was very greatly strengthened about the same time by the development of Austria's policy. It soon appeared that the attitude assumed by Catharine towards Austria in the second partition had been based on a sound calculation. The new minister, Thugut, was of opinion that the aggrandisement of Prussia would be the greatest misfortune to Austria, and that Leopold's most serious mistake had been the neglect of the Russian alliance. He therefore instructed his ambassador in St. Petersburg to declare that the Emperor earnestly desired to renew the former intimate

zinski, and two others of still lower origin, gamesters, pettifoggers and highwaymen."

[1] All this is taken from Buchholtz's despatches to the king, the ministers and General Möllendorf, as well as from Sievers' correspondence in the "*Denkwürdigkeiten von Sievers*", by Blum.

understanding of 1781 with Catharine; he adhered to his refusal to join the Petersburg treaty of January 23d, but did not make any objection to the acquisitions of Russia; contenting himself with earnestly entreating Catharine to prevent, or at least to defer, the final settlement of Prussia's claims.

At the same time he called on Russia to declare what compensation she intended to procure for Austria; pointing out that obstacles had arisen to the Belgian-Bavarian Exchange, and hinting that Austria might be compelled to claim a portion of Poland for herself.[1] Meanwhile Thugut sent a note to Berlin, refusing, in the most positive terms, to acknowledge the treaty of St. Petersburg, protesting against the immoderate extent of the Prussian acquisition, and expressing the greatest astonishment that Prussia should speak of an assent given by the Emperor in December. He said that all that had taken place at that time was of an entirely indefinite nature, and had led him to expect further negotiations, indeed, but by no means an immediate occupation. It immediately became apparent that an adherence to these views must lead to an open breach between the German powers, which would give to the French Republic in the west, and the Russian Autocracy in the east, an absolutely dominant position. Catharine saw the incalculable advantages of such a state of affairs. To stand as umpire between Prussia and Poland was as nothing when compared to this; for now an intestine feud was driving the great Powers of Germany into dependence upon her. She well knew how to take the appropriate steps on both sides.

For the present it was natural, under the circumstances, that she should lean to the side of Prussia, as long as her own relations with Poland were unsettled. But it was necessary at the same time, with a view to the future, to keep up a certain connexion with Austria, and not absolutely to cut

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[1] Vid. Correspondence between Thugut and Cobenzl, Amb. in St. Petersburg. (Archives of Vienna.)

off all her hopes. She therefore told the imperial ambassador that the matter was settled, and could no longer be altered without great mischief, although she allowed that Prussia had been immoderately aggrandized. The Emperor Francis hereupon wrote a letter to Catharine with his own hand, in a very elevated [1] strain, appealing to her generous heart, and drew from her a reply, which, though rather cool, was not altogether discouraging. She begged him, in consideration of the dangers which threatened Europe, to postpone his Polish claims at any rate till the restoration of peace, but, at the same time, expressed the greatest inclination to second his efforts to gain compensation in any other quarter. The ambassador Rasumowski pointed particularly to Bavaria, against the immediate occupation of which, he said, the empress had no objection to make. [2] This hint, as we may easily imagine, was not lost upon Thugut, and it thoroughly answered the purpose of Catharine, to make Prussia, and not herself, appear to be the stumbling block in Austria's path.

As regards Prussia herself, the new complication of affairs had completely bound her to Russia. Her new Polish acquisition, threatened alike by Poland and Austria, was absolutely dependent on the good will of Catharine. For the present Buchholtz placed the greatest confidence in her intentions, as Sivers continued to be all frankness and amiability, and discussed the most ticklish point, the claims of Austria, in the most unreserved manner. "If I were not afraid," said he one day to Buchholtz, "of being laughed at by Möllendorf as a non-military man, I should almost advise him to be on his guard under present circumstances, and to fortify Czenstochau, and gradually to make an arsenal of it against the Cracow border." An hour after this conversation Buchholtz received intelligence from Berlin that these precautionary measures had just been ordered, and he reported

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[1] "Romantic" says Buchholtz.

[2] Sir Morton Eden to Lord Grenville, June 19th.

to the general, with the liveliest satisfaction, this happy coincidence of views. Prussia, in short, with implicit trust in Catharine, apprehended the most hostile measures from Austria, and prepared to oppose them by force of arms.

Matters stood thus in May 1793 between the two mighty allies of the revolutionary war. Prussia thought it necessary to protect her new province against Austria by trenches and redoubts; she certainly regarded every increase of power on the part of her new opponent as a serious danger to herself, and, no doubt, thanked heaven that the armies of France would occupy her greedy neighbour for a long time to come. To fill up the measure of her anxiety and anger, Thugut, in addition to his Polish protests and claims, still adhered to his project against Alsace, and his plan of exchanging Belgium for Bavaria.[1] It seemed as if Austria laid claim to Strasburg and Munich, Lublin and Cracow, at the same time, and insisted, moreover, on a diminution of the Prussian provinces in Poland—a proceeding which would overthrow to the very foundation all existing treaties, and presented Austria in the light of the nearest and most urgent, if not the most dangerous, enemy of Prussia.

This posture of affairs was all the more melancholy, because Thugut had shown himself in these dangerous colours wantonly and unnecessarily, from an excess of diplomatic cleverness. In reality, he would have been contented with any one of these acquisitions—either Bavaria or South Poland, —and he several times signified to the English ambassador his readiness to give up the Bavarian exchange. But he expressly demanded of the cabinet of St. James, that no Prussian statesman should be informed of this renunciation; and Count Mercy, as we know, had received express instructions to say that the emperor would perhaps keep his intended conquests in Belgium in his own hands, or that possibly he only desired to improve the object of exchange

[1] Correspondence of Lord Auckland III. 55.

for the advantage of the House of Wittelsbach. It is difficult to understand the purpose of this duplicity. Thugut probably saw how embarassing Austria's resistance in the matter of Poland, and her success in the Bavarian affair, would be for Prussia; and intended, therefore, to harass the latter from these two quarters, until the king, in order to secure repose on the one side, should give way to the emperor on the other. Of the expediency of this plan there is not much to be said; it is, in fact, condemned by the consideration that Thugut had, at this period, simply no means of occupying Bavaria without Prussia's assistance, and therefore, that after his rejection of the treaty of St. Petersburg, the reference to Bavaria might indeed irritate and embitter, but could serve no practical purpose whatever. And though he was thus forced to rest his hopes entirely on the friendship of England, yet he could not bring himself to give up Bavaria according to England's wish; nay, he made an energetic protest when, about this time, England brought forward a claim to Dunkirk for herself, and to some districts in the province of Liege for Holland. The wisdom of this policy, therefore, is not more commendable than its morality; between the fires of the French Revolution and the stream of Russian conquest, the leading statesman of the German Empire had nothing to interpose but futile and spiteful demonstrations of the pettiest kind.

These dissensions had a most fatal effect on the conduct of the war with France. After Custine's retreat, Mayence had been blockaded by the army of the Duke of Brunswick —22,000 French had been compelled to retire into the town —the remnant of the French Rhine army, scarcely 20,000 men, in a state of utter demoralization, had been driven beyond the Lauter—and the army of the Moselle, which was but little stronger, beyond the Saare. Brunswick was superior to them in every respect, whether we look to the numbers or quality of the opposing armies, or to the strength and security of their positions. If he left about 30,000 men

before Mayence, he might advance with an overwhelming force to the crest of the hills, separate the two hostile bodies, roll them up and disperse them one afteranother; after which the East of France, as far as the eye could reach, would have lain defenceless before him.[1] But under any circumstances a mode of warfare which, in the consciousness of strength, seeks out danger at its source, was little in accordance with the cautious and calculating disposition of the duke, and it was rendered impossible by the political turn in affairs which we have described above. Nothing was more certain than that if the French armies had been annihilated, General Wurmser would have been received with enthusiasm in Alsace as a liberator, and the province taken possession of for Austria without further difficulty; but then the conquest of Bavaria would have approached its realization, and no one could estimate the reaction upon Poland. It was not safe, therefore, to be completely victorious, and the only task of the Prussians was to hold the balance between a hostile ally and a well-disposed enemy. The king, whose devoted and shortsighted nature was in general ill adapted for such complicated relations, satisfied his own mind in this case by saying, that he certainly did not wish to further the ends of Austria, but that as a German prince he would protect the Empire. Instead, therefore, of the annihilation of the French army, the recovery of Mayence was made the main object of the campaign; just as had been agreed upon at Frankfort, in February, before the miserable defeats of Custine. Accordingly full half the army,—more than 40,000 men—were employed in the blockade of the town, and the remainder were distributed in a broad girdle from Kreuznach to Germersheim, for purposes of observation and protection.

The evil consequences of this course were imediately

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[1] In this conviction Valentini on the German, and Gouvion St. Cyr on the French side, are entirely agreed. Marshal Soult entertained the same opinion.

However skilfully Brunswick might distribute his outposts on the rocky heights of the Rheingrafenstein, in the defiles of Kaiserslautern, and the fruitful valleys of the Palatinate, his line of defence was everywhere too weak to resist a serious attack. The distances between the posts were measured with the most scrupulous accuracy, so as to allow of mutual help; but unfortunately Wurmser, who with 15,000 men formed the extreme wing on the Rhine and the Lauter, was always moving away with a view to an adventurous attack on Alsace, so that it was found necessary to appeal to the Prince of Coburg to call him to order. It became known that the French were making use of the unexpected cessation of arms to strengthen themselves from the garrisons in their rear, and the grand levies of March; so that by the end of April Custine had once more 36,000, and the army of the Moselle 27,000 men. The Prussians, therefore, made the most urgent appeals to Austria and the Empire for corresponding reinforcements; but we already know how little was to be expected from them, and how every thing conspired to stifle the remaining sentiments of national feeling in the heart of the king.

The prevalence of such feelings necessarily produced lassitude and indifference in the whole conduct of the war. Against Mayence the besiegers could for the present proceed only by way of blockade, because they were entirely destitute of siege artillery. The singular spectacle was presented at this time of an Austrian park of artillery passing Mayence on its way to the Netherlands, while a Dutch battery was being laboriously dragged up the Rhine from Holland for the siege of Mayence. The duty of the troops meanwhile was extremely severe, as the numerous garrisons continually assumed the offensive, attempted many dangerous sallies, and disputed the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of the town with the greatest obstinacy. At the headquarters of the king in Guntersblum, on the other hand, there was little to be seen of war, in consequence of the

cessation of all great operations. Now and then the different posts were inspected, military conferences held, and a barren correspondence carried on with Wurmser. Then again excursions were made to the neighbouring court at Deux-Ponts, —where the elector palatine entertained his august protector with splendid festivities—or across the Rhine to Darmstadt, where just at that time the betrothal of the Prussian Crown-Prince and Prince Louis (of Prussia) with the amiable Princesses of Mecklenburg-Strelitz took place. In spite of all his diplomatic annoyances, the love of pleasure was once more kindled in the sated heart of the King by the vernal breezes, the blooming landscape of the lovely Palatinate, and the daily excitement of the petty war. Again and again did he repair with a small retinue to Frankfort, to which he was drawn by the attractions of a fair enslaver, and where his passion was continually inflamed by stubborn obstacles. But political intrigue intruded even upon these enjoyments, and spread its threads and snares in the quiet rendezvous of Frankfort, as well as in the scenes of the masked balls at Darmstadt, which so greatly occupied the public attention. Since the appointment of Thugut, Manstein had met with a powerful rival in Lucchesini, who, as we have seen, had maintained from the very first, in opposition to Haugwitz, that the Vienna arrangement was futile and pernicious. His prophecies were now confirmed; the king was seized with an angry shudder wherever the Bavarian Belgian exchange was mentioned, and Lucchesini's influence was raised by the remembrance of his correct judgment. In addition to this advantage, he was, in general cultivation, tact in business, and *savoir vivre*, as far superior to the sour-tempered and narrow-minded Manstein, as to the wearisome and peddling formality of the Duke of Brunswick. On all occasions decided even to dogmatism, he spared the king the hated necessity of reflection and resolve; and he practised, with all the delight of a *virtuoso*, the base but influential art of spying out and profiting by the weaknesses and secret

wishes of his master. Thus he had lent a helping hand both in Darmstadt and Frankfort, and thereby put the corner-stone to his influence with the king. Viewed from without, this personal predilection of the king appeared a matter of hardly any importance, but it was really destined to produce a very considerable effect on the history of the world. At the moment which decided the future of Germany, the ablest of all the opponents of Austria took the lead in Prussia; while Thugut, the bitterest enemy of Prussia, bore the sway in Austria. Both countries were ruled by men who followed no other star than selfish advantage and temporary convenience, and had not the slightest idea of the national interests of the German empire.

To complete the picture of the Coalition war at this period, we need only add, that in the Netherlands the Prince of Coburg—immediately after the fall of Dumouriez—invested the first of the French border fortresses, the inconsiderable Condé, employed part of his forces to cover himself against the neighbouring towns of Lille and Lequesnoi, and with a feeble remnant of 11 batallions watched the wrecks of the French army. Here, too, the war promised to become in the first place a struggle for the fortresses; but the force of circumstances might on this occasion, also, as after the capture of Aix-la-Chapelle, have led to more extended operations, had not the weakness of the German forces rendered such an extension simply impossible. Without reckoning the divisions which were indispensable to the protection of Treves, Luxemburg and Namur, Coburg stood with his 45,000 men before Condé, and Knobeldorf with 8000 Prussians not far from him in Tourney. The rest of the forces—Dutch and English, Hanoverians and Hessians,—were not expected before the end of April, or even the middle of May; and previous to their arrival it would have been madness to advance, notwithstanding the weakness of the enemy. The Committee of Public Safety, therefore, had in this quarter, as well as on the Rhine, plenty of time

to collect and strengthen their forces. It so happened that the Committee had drawn together 21 batallions from different departments for the war against La Vendée; and these were now sent by forced marches against the northern frontier, which was chiefly threatened. Whereupon Carnot, at that time conventional commissioner at Lille, was able to report to Paris, by the middle of April, that there was no longer any question of danger. In the begining of May General Dampierre even proceeded to assume the offensive, and on the 1st and 8th endeavoured to break the blockade of Condé by impetuous charges on the covering corps. But some batallions of Austrian grenadiers under General Wenkheim repulsed the fiery assault of the enemy—in spite of their superior numbers—with iron resolution; and Dampierre himself was mortally wounded in a last desperate charge. Yet the Austrians were not in a condition to follow up their victory. We shall hereafter see what chances a vigorous leader with a powerful army would have had at this moment; but Coburg had to rest well satisfied with merely maintaining the position which he had taken up, on the edge of the great ring of fortresses. The Committee of Public Safety had many a quiet week before them for diplomacy and warlike preparations.

Let us see how they employed them. Danton, immediately on his entrance into the Committee, had assumed the management of foreign affairs, and was supported by his friend Herault-Sechelles, and the ever-serviceable and willing Barère. He found this department, like all the other branches of the public service, in a state of utter disorder. After the trial of the king, Lebrun had become as powerless as the rest of his colleagues. Having risen to power with Dumouriez, he was deeply affected by his decline and fall; continually exposed to the attacks of the Jacobins, he lost his strength and courage, neglected the business of his office, or carried it on without system; and he who, three months before, wished to turn the world upside down, now longed for peace at any

price. In the Convention itself the Girondists, the originators of the war, entirely shared the opinion of the minister, after they had learned that in foreign as well as home affairs, their former policy had only furthered the cause of the Jacobins. The latter thought that there was nothing higher or better than the decree of the 15th of December; and Robespierre, who turned this feeling of his party, like every other, to his own advantage, coloured his sketch of the rights of man with some high-sounding propositions, in which he declared that it was the duty of all peoples to make war upon all kings, as oppressors of humanity and rebels against nature. Between these differing views Danton took up as decided a position as on the occasion of the appointment of the Committee itself. He would not hear of a humiliating peace, such as the Girondists advocated; he knew full well that it would ruin them all, and bring them to the gallows; and as he was well informed of the unsoundness of the Coalition, he saw in the actual posture of affairs far greater incentives to a bold advance than a timid retreat. At the fire-breathing impetuosity of the Jacobins he shrugged his shoulders, and considered it ridiculous to reject a useful alliance with a State, merely because the ruler of it wore a crown. There was at first, indeed, much murmuring on the Mountain when, on the 14th of April, he laughed at the idea of a universal war with all kings, and put the question, who would be willing to waste the blood of Frenchmen to overthrow the Emperor of China! But he succeeded at last, and obtained from the Convention a distinct declaration, that as France would allow of no foreign interference in her domestic politics, so she, on her part, renounced all right to meddle with the constitutions of other countries. The object of this open renunciation of the revolutionary policy was declared by Barère on the 16th. "By this decree," he said, "you have laid the foundation of peace:" and that the majority were satisfied with this declaration was immediately proved by their granting a secret fund of six millions for the nego-

tiations which had been commenced by the Committee of Public Safety.

It is true that Danton had not destined this money to the immediate promotion of peace, but at any rate to the formation of alliances of a very anti-jacobinical character. Thoroughly sick of domestic broils, he transferred the residue of his restless energy to the field of European politics. In this sphere he intended to show, before his end, what a man of his calibre could do. He would teach the Jacobins that more was to be done for the Revolution by firmness and prudence than by frantic violence; and show the Gironde that peace was only to be obtained by the energetic conduct of the war to a successful end. Nevertheless he was much more moderate in his claims than Lebrun had been, in the time of his arrogance; the state of affairs, too, was much more favourable to Danton than it had been to Lebrun in November; and therefore the steps he took were highly fertile of consequences, if not for the moment, at any rate in the future.

His measures received their first direction from the great event which absorbed the whole attention of the east of Europe—the colossal development of Russian power. Dumouriez and Lebrun had, as we have seen, also turned their attention in this direction; and the latter had on this account thought of Sweden, Poland and Turkey, as useful allies against Russia. All his plans, however, had ended in smoke, because just at that time Austria and Prussia were united, and immediately afterwards the breach between England and France took place. In consequence of this unfavourable juncture, Lebrun was so much disheartened that he dropped the embassy at Constantinople, did nothing at all for Poland, and obstinately turned his back on an opportunity for action which was actually forced on him by the Swedes themselves. For, singularly enough, it was from Stockholm, whence Gustavus III. had intended to start on his crusade against the Revolution, that exactly one year afterwards the first offer of alliance was sent to the Republic.

Duke Charles, the guardian of the young King Gustavus Adolphus, had at first, in spite of Catharine's angry protests, retired into a strict neutrality in the general war. Although this position might have suited his weak and vacillating disposition for a long time, various circumstances combined to make him entirely change his system. For the last hundred years it had been an article of faith with the rulers of Sweden that their State could not exist without foreign subsidies. Catharine had furnished these for several years, but had withdrawn them upon the Swedish declaration of neutrality, and thereby placed the minister Reuterholm—who cared for nothing but money and power—under the necessity of procuring money, no matter from what quarter. A brief state of indecision as to the choice of sides was put an end to by the Baron von Staël, who pointed out to the duke the utter annihilation with which Sweden was threatened by the power of Russia. In January 1793 he succeeded in procuring a commission to repair once more to Paris, and to offer the Republic, on consideration of a large subsidy, the alliance of Sweden, under the pretext of the neutral trade being threatened by England. [1] As long as he had to deal with Lebrun, who would listen to no extension of the already vast theatre of war, he could effect but little: but on the appointment of the Committee of Public Safety the negotiation was taken up with so much zeal, that on the 23d of May a treaty was signed, in which Sweden engaged to furnish 10 ships of the line and 8,000 men against all enemies of France. Almost at the same time a manifesto appeared at Stockholm, which once more laid down the principles of 1780 [2] hostile to English commerce, and thereby removed all doubt in Paris as

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[1] This negotiation was mentioned for the first time, but in a very incomplete manner, in Barère's *Memoires*. I have made use of a very detailed account, which Staël gave of it to the later Committee of Public Safety, 15. Germ. III. [2] Moniteur, 2nd June.

to the ratification of the treaty by the king. The Committee gave their assent to it on the 17th of May.

The advantage thus gained seemed by no means inconsiderable. It was of no little importance to revolutionary France to have made her first treaty with one of the old States of Europe; and however small the forces of Sweden were, they would have served as an efficient basis for an active interference in the affairs of Poland. And lastly, what a favourable turn might be thereby given to the almost forgotten mission to Constantinople! The Committee set to work with zeal. Semonville was once more sought out, and money collected for his equipment; a peaceable and almost humble step taken by Lebrun towards peace with England was unreservedly confirmed, because it seemed to fit in with the eastern plan. Immediately after the loss of Belgium, which country had been the sole cause of the English war, the French minister had secretly asked in London, on what conditions England would make peace.[1] Danton's practical good sense outweighed all sentiments of military honour; for peace with England was an indispensable pre-requisite for an oriental war. What prospects would be opened if they succeeded in appeasing England! if the torch of war blazed up in the rear of the Coalition on the Danube, the Vistula, the Duna and the Neva, at the same moment!

This was the first path which was opened to the policy of France by the faults of the Coalition; but it was not the only one. An altogether different scheme, in which not the banks of the Vistula, but of the Rhine, played the principal part, was rendered feasible to the Committee by the breach between Austria and Prussia; which, with all its details, was known to the French government from sources whith wich we shall presently become acquainted. In this case, too, as in that of Sweden, the Committee had not the merit of invention, but they seized the opportunity which was offered them

[1] All this is taken from the protocols of the ministerial council.

by others, with energy and skill. The first idea was given them by Custine, who, like Dumouriez, in the midst of his military operations was never able to keep his thoughts from the charms of politics, and alternately overwhelmed his government with constitutional, warlike, and diplomatic schemes. His earlier hopes of crushing the German empire at the first onset had, indeed, vanished away, and given place to an infinite amount of caution in all his military operations. With violent expressions of anger he threw all the blame of his disasters on his government, complaining that Pache had left him, as well as the Belgian army, without reinforcements, and that Beurnonville had crossed his plans out of personal hatred; in short he was filled to overflowing with patriotic wrath against the disorders of Paris. In this mood he heard of the appointment of the Committee of Public Safety, and the election of his intimate friend Guyton-Morveau as one of its members; and he immediately conceived the idea of getting the reins of government into his own hands through their means, and saving France both at home and abroad. On the 9th of April he sent a memorial to the Convention, in which he characterised that assembly as an arena of party feuds, howling fury, and utter selfishness; advocated the appointment of some man of great mind and virtuous soul as dictator; announced a grand plan of deliverance for the country, and demanded either full powers for its execution or his own dismissal from office. No one in the Convention took any notice of his bombastic letter, but the Democrats in the War ministry observed that it was exactly in the style of Lafayette and Dumouriez, and secretly resolved on the speedy overthrow of the new dictator. Meanwhile Guyton-Morveau received the promised plan of war, and thought it sufficiently important to be immediately laid before the council of ministers and the Committee of Public Safety, for their serious consideration. It is indeed remarkable enough in itself, from the breadth of its views; but more especially because a year later it was taken up again by Carnot, and then became

the bridge to all the triumphs of the Republic. Custine proposed to treat the whole region from Strasburg to Dunkirk as one vast theatre of war, and to bring all its operations into close connection with one another. After taking into consideration the impending advance of the Austrians on the Scheldt, and the sluggish movements of the Prussians on the Rhine, he proposed to break up the Army of the Rhine, to employ 19,000 of its soldiers in occupying the passes of the Vosges Mountains, to unite the rest with the army of the Moselle, to lead the united forces—which would then amount to 60,000 or 70,000 men—in quick marches to the Ardennes, throw them upon Namur, and thereby place the Allies between two armies superior to their own, and uproot for ever the Austrian rule from the soil of Belgium.

It is easy to see that such a movement would have completely decided the fate of Belgium. It is also clear that Custine reckoned on Prussian inactivity on the Rhine, since, without this, the conquest of Belgium would have been more than outweighed by the exposure of the eastern frontier of France. Meanwhile the ministerial council took Custine's projects into consideration, and Lebrun commissioned the general in the first place to sound Prussia, to see whether the king, in return for the surrender of Mayence, would agree to allow the garrison to retire, and to conclude a formal armistice. Having once entered upon this course they soon proceeded to more comprehensive plans. Desportes, the French *chargé d'affaires* in Stuttgart, had been obliged, in consequence of the declaration of war by the Empire—which had at last been issued—to leave that court, where the state of feeling was very hostile to Austria, and where he had the best opportunity of studying the affairs of Germany. This man was now selected by the Committee to try his hand in the first place upon Bavaria, and through her upon Prussia. When Custine still held possession of Deux-Ponts in February, the duke's minister, Baron von

Esebeck, had been arrested by the general's orders on the charge of intriguing against France. Desportes was directed to go in the first place to him, and he found the poor baron, who had been greatly terrified by his imprisonment, ready to perform any good service for his liberator, They quickly agreed, first of all to obtain the cooperation of the Prince of Bretzenheim, the eldest of Charles Theodore's natural sons, in rousing the Duke out of his usual apathy, and thus to induce the court of Munich to take decided steps in favour of France. If this plan succeeded and bore its natural fruits, Prussia would at any rate make no very great resistance. The great point was to turn the prevailing displeasure against Austria to the best possible account, and instead of high-flying revolutionary ideas, by which Lebrun had scared away the king in November, to offer him intelligible, practical, advantages, in accordance with current Prussian views. The necessary materials lay ready enough at hand, and the rulers at Paris determined to make use of them.

In the beginning of May a detailed and well-considered plan was brought forward for approval in Paris through Desportes. Desportes proposed, in the first place, nothing less than the secularization of the three ecclesiastical States of Mayence, Treves and Cologne; an idea which had occurred at an earlier period to Lebrun and the Girondists, but which had fallen to the ground from its connection with their universal propaganda. Desportes now substituted for their vague scheme a plan based on the policy of self-interest. While he stipulated for the republican independence of the town of Mayence, in accordance with the promise of France, he proposed to give the other electorates to the most powerful of the German states, and in return to gain their alliance for the Convention. The electorate of Mayence, and a portion of the territory of Treves, were to fall to Bavaria, which would in this way round off its possessions in the Rhenish Palatinate in the most desirable way,

and in return would gladly place the remote districts of Jülich and Berg at the disposal of the French. The French government was then to offer these two duchies, with the rest of Treves and the whole of Electoral Cologne, to the crown of Prussia, which had long desired to gain possession of them. Desportes had no doubt that the neutrality of Prussia, at the very least, might be thus secured; and it then seemed certain that France might, without any danger, unite all her forces to overpower the Austrians in Belgium.

The characteristic feature of this scheme, we may observe, is not the old enmity of the Revolution to the ecclesiastical States, but the proposal to secularize them in the interest of Germany herself. It was the first appearance of those plans which ten years afterwards gave the German Empire nearly its present constitution. [1] But there was this infinitely important difference, in favour of Germany, in the plan of 1793, that the vast territories of the left bank of the Rhine were not to be given to foreigners, but to German princes. In this respect it resembled the project of Charles VII., who, fifty years earlier, had proposed the secularization, in the first place like Desportes, for the advantage of Prussia and Bavaria, without distinction of religion — the former country being protestant and the latter catholic. In this connection we clearly see that the proposition had, in the fullest sense of the word, an historical foundation in Germany; and in fact in the empire itself—if we except the interested parties, and the Austrian politicians—the conviction had long existed, that the union of the princely and episcopal offices, was an evil both to Church and State. In the 18th century men did not much concern themselves whether the ecclesiastical princes were good bishops or not, but they saw only too clearly, that the bishops were with few exceptions the most wretched administrators of a State. Almost all their territories were burdened with debt, and their towns im-

[1] This was written before 1866.

poverished; in agriculture and trade, in civilization and education, they were far behind their secular neighbours. And in how glaring and sad a manner had the military impotence of these little potentates and the consequent weakness of the western frontiers of the empire, which were entirely occupied by them, been displayed since the beginning of the war! While Mayence and Treves alike set the example of imbecility and cowardice at the first appearance of Custine, the neighbouring states of the Upper Rhine and Franconia hastened to declare to the empire that they would have nothing to do with a war of the empire, and that with respect to the countries already attacked they should follow the principle that self-preservation is the highest duty. In like manner the Bishop of Paderborn declared that he did not indeed intend to furnish troops, or any considerable subsidies, but that in case of extreme need he would manifest his patriotic feelings by a small contribution of money. Similar cases occurred in the cities of the empire and among the smaller dynasts; and their conduct was an evidence of that universal rottenness of the feudal system, which, since the reconstitution of the greater territories, had had its most characteristic representatives in the cities, and in the knights and prelates, of the empire. But, without question, the most peculiar growth of the soil of feudalism, and the most glaring contrasts to the secular States, were to be found in the ecclesiastical dominions. Every man among the people knew that these two elements of the empire were entirely incompatible in their nature—that the one belonged to the past, and the other to the future of Germany; that the one formed the weak places, and the other the powerful organs of the nation. Under such circumstances it might be regarded as a most unexampled piece of good fortune that the old foe of the empire, which had always cherished all its weaknesses, should now give the first impulse to improvement. We need only call to mind the innumerable wounds which France was able for centuries to inflict on

the crumbling defences of Germany, and then consider a proposition of the French government to give Prussia her present Rhine province, and thereby make the west of Germany invulnerable to France herself. Let us reflect, likewise, that this idea arose at the very same time that Prussia saw in the German Empire nothing but weakness and aversion to the war; detected in Russia the first traces of double-dealing; and thought herself obliged to fortify her own possessions against the aroused hatred of Austria. It will then become clear to us, that the whole character of the war must necessarily undergo the most complete change, as soon as the Committee of Public Safety openly adopted the system of Desportes.

These points, as we may easily imagine, were regarded in Paris from very various points of view. Herault de Sechelles received repeated representations from Desportes, in which he described Bavaria (in highly exaggerated colours, as we shall afterwards see), as entirely trustworthy, and prophesied the certain overthrow of the Prussian throne consequent on its very friendship with the French Republic; so that peace would bring about the real commencement of the Revolutionary propaganda. But other persons in the immediate vicinity of Danton held very different language. Thomas Payne, for example, who had formerly come over from America to revolutionize Europe, wrote to Danton on the 3d of May, that all hope of the world's freedom had been destroyed for ever by the disorders of the French democrats; that France must seek peace to save herself from the greatest horrors. In Danton's mood at that time both these views had points of attraction for him. At all events he inclined more and more decidedly to Custine's opinions, with which the proposed peace with Prussia was intimately connected; and on the 12th of May the first step in this direction was taken, when Custine, in consequence of a most emphatic recommendation of the Committee, received the command of

the army of the North, after the ministerial council had definitively accepted his great plan for the conduct of the war.

The hostile armies before Mayence stood at that time in a very peculiar position to one another. The Prussian headquarters had received preliminary intelligence of the wishes of the French rulers through an agent of Custine named Corbeau, who since October had been accredited to the Bavarian authorities in Mannheim. The general himself had commenced a correspondence with Brunswick in the beginning of May, in which he professed himself an avowed enemy of the Jacobins, and called on the Duke to become peacemaker to an exhausted world. The military operations became doubly sluggish under these circumstances. Before the fortress the Prussians contented themselves with forming batteries, and engaging in petty skirmishes in the neighbouring villages. Custine, on his side, did not attempt anything against the blockading army until the 17th of May, when he made a feeble attack, to which he was driven almost by force by the deputies of the Convention, three radical Maratists; and even then, after a little firing, he retreated with 25,000 men before three battalions of Austrians. During this cannonade on the Queich, Prince Louis Ferdinand entertained the Mayence generals at a military breakfast between the hostile lines, at which he held a long political conversation with the deputy Merlin de Thionville, an intimate friend of Danton, about the evacuation of the town. Officers and soldiers drank together in the most cordial manner, and a feeling prevailed that their present enmity was on the point of being extinguished. [1]

The sentiments of King Frederick Willam II., indeed, had not yet reached this point. He hated the Jacobins as cor-

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[1] The letters of Desportes and Payne here mentioned are among the papers of the Committee of Public Safety in the imperial archives at Paris; the correspondence of Custine, partly in the *Dépôt de la guerre*, *armée du Rhin* 1793, partly among the documents of Custine's trial.

dially as in the former year; and we have seen with how little reluctance he had promised to continue the war until the Revolution should be put down. Nevertheless, as a matter of fact, his own policy in respect to German affairs was directed to the very same object as that of Danton and Desportes. As early as December, when perplexed by the difficulties of the Bavarian-Belgian exchange, he had put the question at St. Petersburg, whether Austria, in case she could not find any other compensation, might not undertake a grand secularization in Germany. This proposal was sent on in the course of the negotiations to Vienna, where, however, it certainly raised this consideration before all others, whether such a step on the part of Austria might not prove a dangerous example to the avarice of Prussia.[1] It is clear enough, what weight an open and official proposal of peace from the French government, in accordance with the views of Desportes, might have had, under the circumstances we have just described.

But this prospect was quickly closed. The Parisian Revolution at this moment roused itself for a last and most tremendous effort, by which the freedom of France and the peace of Europe were removed, for a whole generation, to an unattainable distance.

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[1] Ssolowjoff, "*Der Fall Polens*," 310, 313, from the documents in the Russian archives.

CHAPTER III.

FALL OF THE GIRONDE.

The French democrats hostile to peace.—Raising of 300,000 recruits. Revolt of la vendée—the conventional commissioners in the departments.—Fresh demands of money by the parisian municipality. —The departmental council demands fixed prices.—Forced loan and recruitment in paris.—Consequent émeute of citizens in the sections.—The democrats determine to overthrow the gironde. —Danton's proposals rejected by the gironde.—Danton robespierre and pache at charenton.—Commission of twelve appointed against these intrigues.—Arrest of Hebert.—Attitude of the committee of public safety.—The revolt of may 31st fails.— Revolt of june 2nd.—Arrest of the girondists.

The Committee of Public Safety was, as we have seen, the offspring of an alliance between Danton, Robespierre and Marat—i. e. a union of all the democratic factions. The Jacobins expected that its establishment would ensure the absolute dominion of their principles over the whole of France, and it was only after giving his associates the necessary guarantees on this point, that Danton received from them the sole possession of the newly-created powers. In domestic affairs he was obliged to look to them for support against royalists and catholics, against Bourgeoisie and Gironde. Against all these enemies, who pursued him with the same deadly hatred, and who formed, perhaps, four-fifths of the French people, he had no other means of defence than the armed bands of the Hôtel de Ville, the Jacobin clubs, the democratic communes and the conventional commissioners in the provinces. If the Committee of Public Safety did not choose to rely on these resources, it had no support at all in the country; and for the sake of its own mere

existence it was compelled to procure for these organs the despotic rule over the enslaved nation.

We may notice in this place an irreconcileable contradiction which attached itself to this new government from the very first moment of its existence. Nothing is more certain than that Danton himself, and still more decidedly his colleagues of the centre, desired to check the progress of communistic mob-rule, to form a rational government, and for this purpose to bring back the foreign policy of the country to a moderate and orderly system. Under the influence of these views they had made advances to the Girondists, and had by no means changed them because the latter rejected their overtures. Whilst their wishes were in all respects opposed to the programme of the Jacobins, they were compelled by a regard for their own existence to place themselves at the head of this very party and to promote its interests. Under their auspices the Jacobins subjected one portion of the country after another to their rule, and they were obliged to look on, to assist and applaud, with the full assurance in their hearts that the triumph of Jacobinical communism would lead to the overthrow of all their own cherished plans. This was more particularly the case in respect to their foreign policy and the conduct of the war. Marat was already denouncing their greatest general as a traitor, and no one could speak in the circles of the Hôtel de Ville of an alliance with a crowned head without risking his life. It was only the fact that the Gironde still formed a counterpoise in the Convention to the absolute rule of the Mountain, which enabled the Committee to continue its negotiations. It stood therefore, exactly as the former ministers had done, between the parties, depending for its existence on the continuance of party strife, and compelled to conceal its own game, and alternately to use one faction against another. If one of these were to obtain a decided victory, the position of the Committee would become untenable and its downfall certain.

All the more impetuously on this account did the democratic party strive to make use of the favourable moment to secure the advantages they had already won, and to remove the last obstacles to their progress. Having conquered Paris in January, the time was come for them to subjugate the provinces also. It is evident that the conventional commissioners could come forward with far greater authority than the envoys of the Hôtel de Ville in September; and they therefore hastened, with eager zeal, to fulfil the expectations of their party. Their immediate pretext was, as we know, the levy of 300,000 men which had been decreed in March. The recruiting had, indeed, at present been followed by no very brilliant results,[1] as will always be the case when conscription is for the first time substituted for the system of volunteering. Here and there the peasants resisted with arms in their hands, but it was only in one quarter—the departments of La Vendée and Deux-Sevres—that a lasting and dangerous revolt arose. We have already remarked upon the peculiar position of the peasantry of these districts—the isolated situation of the woods and marshes which cover the whole of Lower Poitou—the good understanding in which the nobles and peasants carried on the rearing of cattle together—the warm and steady attachment with which these simple people clung to the church of their fathers. When the Revolution drove the nobles into exile, the farmers grumbled; when it laid violent hands upon the church, it seemed to them the offspring of Satan. But still these simple people kept quite aloof from politics, and the country remained quiet in spite of the overthrow of the throne and the murder of the king; until at last the conscription reached their

[1] Cambon says in his report to the Committee of Public Safety on the 12th of July; "without the interference of the conventional commissioners not 20,000 men would have been raised." It had been before stated in the Convention, on the 10th of April, that the population of many villages had fled into the neighbouring towns to escape the conscription more easily.

cottages. Then, indeed, the word was passed from village to village, that if the musket must be shouldered, they would rather shed the last drop of their blood in fighting against the heaven-detested Revolution, than in serving its evil ends; and within a few weeks many thousand men had taken arms, and all the districts from the Loire to Rochelle had renounced their obedience to the Convention. They were but irregular bands, badly armed, with little order, and in loose connection with one another. It was fortunate for them that the government was obliged by the defection of Dumouriez to send off the regiments, which were already marching against them, to the northern frontier, so that they had leisure for arming and fortifying the country.

Elsewhere the population responded to the warlike summons, in some places with patriotic enthusiasm, in others with ill-concealed reluctance: at any rate they obeyed. Vast numbers of men were collected, frequently more than the decree required; in some departments the number is calculated at 20,000, and even 30,000 men. The Committee of Public Safety did their best to transform these swarms of recruits into serviceable soldiers. The manufacture of arms was carried on with restless haste, all the horses *de luxe* seized, and uniforms and shoes bought up, to the utter exhaustion of the treasury. Dépôts were established at suitable places in the interior to receive the conscripts, and to give them their first training, and then to send them off in never-ending droves to the different armies. We may here anticipate the result. It was the division in the Coalition on the one hand and the wonderful activity of the Committee on the other, which enabled the Republic to resist all Europe. Within two months the French armies attained the numerical amount which it maintained, without change, until the end of the year; and as their numbers were not further increased until the administration of Carnot in 1794, the so often repeated assertion that the fall of the Gironde, and the absolute rule

of the Mountain, stamped the renowned 14 armies out of the ground, is nothing more than one of those rhetorical phrases of which the history of this period is full. On the contrary, we shall soon see that the peculiar measures of the Mountain party did not promote but impeded the armaments; we ought to say that France conquered not by means, but in spite, of the Jacobins.

This was shown in the most glaring manner in the conduct of the conventional commissioners during the first levy. Who could blame them for carrying out the conscription with the utmost severity, and without the slightest regard to the circumstances of individuals? — for rather taking too much for the supply of the armies than too little? But, in fact, the levying and equipment of the troops was with them only a pretext for subjecting the country to their own partisans — to the clubs and the rabble; and a single glance at their other proceedings will at once open before us the abyss, towards the edge of which they were driving France. Their first step was to depose all the authorities displeasing to them, to appoint central committees, with almost unlimited power, as ruling bodies in the departments, and to institute absolute revolutionary committees as police courts in each of the communes. And thus a new and despotic official hierarchy took the place of the authorities which had been chosen by the people in 1791. The clubs, which furnished the members of the governing bodies exclusively from the artisans and day-labourers, became a portion of the official government; and the needy classes were solemnly declared by the commissioners to be the only hope of the country — the only privileged persons in the Revolution. The brutality with which this doctrine was carried out, in opposition to the mass of the nation, and in contempt of the rights of private individuals, can only be expressed in the commissioners' own words. In Versailles Chales told the Sansculottes that they had only to put their hands into the pockets of the

rich; and Guffroi explained to a popular meeting at Chartres, that they were in the midst of a revolution, which meant, that the purse of the rich was now open to the poor.[1] "It is time," cried Simon in the club of Annecy, "that the war of the poor against the rich, the usurers, and the egoists, should commence; that the people may proceed with all resources to the Revolution."[2] "The aristocrats," wrote Gonene from Tarn and Aveyron, "are tamed, and the Sansculottes ready for insurrection."[3] This was the watch-word in every quarter, and the mob was every where summoned to an attack on all existing institutions. Chabot, in the market-place of Toulouse, preached to the people: "ye women, increase and multiply; for which purpose ye want neither priests nor parsons, the citizen Christ was himself the first Sansculotte."[4] The commissioner at Sedan declared that there were no citizens but the Sansculottes, since the rich had always been enemies of the people; that moreover the former were no longer bound by any laws, since the Constitution had perished with the monarchy.[5] If we consider that there existed in every place a hungry and fanatical proletariate—that the order to revolt was now given in the name of the highest and absolute authority in the State — that every check or barrier of police or law was now removed in the name of the law itself — we shall be able to estimate the despair which now brooded far and wide over the land; for, from the very first, the agitators did not content themselves with words. Whereas formerly those were arrested who excited men to robbery, now he who resisted violence was deprived of his freedom. In Sedan the commissioners had 55 men incarcerated in one day — in Nancy 104[6] in three weeks — in Arras more than a

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[1] Buchez, 25, 156. Gorsas, *Courier*, May 15. — [2] Gorsas, May 5th. — [3] Debates of the Jacobin Club, April 21th. — [4] Conv. Nat. July 12th. Great applause from the Mountain and the galleries! — [5] Gorsas, May 30th. — [6] Report of the Commissioners C. N., May 3th.

thousand[1] in two months — in Jura above 4000 in the same time[2] — and every where without any charge or examination — as *suspects*, egoists, or enemies of freedom. In Lons-le-Saulnier, all persons of noble birth, with their servants,[3] and in Aix, all the inhabitants of a certain quarter[4] without distinction, were arrested and imprisoned. These are single examples taken at random from an endless list of similar acts of horrible tyranny, which were committed throughout nearly the whole of France. Bourgeois and peasants were benumbed with terror; the millions of isolated men ventured on no resistance against this alliance of the government and the clubs. In Toulon the inhabitants had compelled their Jacobins in October to send back to prison the galley-slaves whom they had liberated in the name of freedom. But since January not a hand had been raised against the club, when it made weekly raids against the neighbouring villages, and levied black mail upon the inhabitants.[5] It was only in some of the larger cities, such as Bordeaux and Rouen, that the Bourgeois, led by a like-minded municipality, defended themselves from these outrages. In Marseilles and Lyons, too, they opposed an obstinate resistance to the demagogues in the sectional assemblies, and thereby excited them to frantic hatred. In Lyons Challier openly endeavoured, during the whole winter, to bring about a renewal of the September massacres, mustered his pikemen in the open market-place, and made them take an oath to exterminate all aristocrats, moderates, monopolists, and egoists.[6] In March all the prisons of Lyons were already filled, but the massacre was postponed because

[1] Gorsas, May 27. — [2] Sommier (a zealous Montagnard) *Histoire du Jura.* — [3] Another commissioner makes the same boast in the Jacobin club, May 10th. — [4] Reports of the sections of Marseilles C. N. May 25th. Robespierre in the Jacobin Club, April 3th. — [5] Lauvergne, *Histoire du Departement du Var.* — [6] Guillon de Monléon, Lyon, I, 158. Conf. *Revol. de Paris*, XV, 234, 402, 433. Extracts from the Lyons journal in Gorsas, Feb. 27th.

the staunch Jacobin Challier was at variance with the conventional commissioners Legendre and Bazine, zealous adherents of Danfon; and the intended establishment of a revolutionary tribunal was thereby prevented.[1] Greater harmony reigned in Marseilles, where the commissioners ordered a general disarming of the insubordinate Bourgeois, and with the muskets thus obtained began to equip a patriotic army of 6000 men, who were to march to Paris and do their best to prepare a 10th of August for the Gironde.[2]

Towards the end of April all the departments, except La Vendée, and perhaps Rouen and Bordeaux, were by these means completely subjected to the rule of the Jacobin rabble. Such a fact necessarily reacted in the strongest manner on the metropolis of the empire and the Convention. The mere moral influence was a powerful one, and the victors no longer made any secret of their wish[3] to draw material resources from the conquered provinces for the conquest of Paris. The Girondists, who knew that they were more particularly threatened, considered their position, and determined to anticipate the attack. In the Convention the moment was favourable to them, on account of the absence of the commissioners, which deprived the Mountain of nearly a hundred of its most resolute partisans; and in the country they might reckon on the desperate exasperation of the middle classes, the consequence of the unbounded tyranny of the democrats. Hitherto the bourgeoisie had hated the Gironde, as the originators of the war and the destroyers

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[1] This is proved by the documents produced by Guillon; only imaginary, on the other hand, is their connection with Bourbon (Funke 1793) or Orleanist intrigues, which Guillon — incorrectly amplifying the incorrect statement of Senart—assumes. — [2] Police reports of the 26th April (in the Imperial archives). Desfieux in the Jacobin club, April 17th. C. N. 12th and 25th of May. — [3] Reports from Bordeaux C. N. April 18. — from Nismes C. N. May 7.

of the Constitutution, as much as the other Jacobins; but now that it was no longer a question of form of government and political interests, but of the person and life, the rights and property, of every individual, the Gironde could reckon on general support, if they now came forward in defence of these precious personal possessions. It was high time for action, for the Parisian party in the capital itself — in the same way as their agents had already done in the provinces — began to carry into practice the principles which had been santioned by the Convention, viz. the right to lucrative employment, cheap goods, and an increasing rate of taxation on the rich. The leaders of all these movements were still the Municipality, which Pache presided over with cautious zeal and subtle pliancy. The starting-point of all their proceedings was the poverty of the Commune, which claimed a yearly increasing grant from the State treasury, and came into immediate conflict on this point with every succeeding government. In the Committee of Public Safety the finances were entrusted to Cambon, who was a revolutionist from the bottom of his heart; but even he was frightened and angry when he discovered that the State had at that time already advanced 110 million livres to the Commune, and was expected to go on making further loans for indefinite periods. He declared that he would not only not pay any more, but would force the repayment of the sums already lent. At this announcement Pache remained calm and submissive as usual, and left it to his friends to depict the wrath which such a resolution would excite amongst the people; and Danton gradually persuaded his hotheaded colleague of the impossibility of repayment.[1] But in regard to future advances the Committee remained immoveable, and the Municipality, fully determined not to give up the blessings they had hitherto enjoyed, gave their

[1] Debates of the Jacobin club *français*, N. 247, in Buchez, 28, Aug. 26th., from the Republicain 485.

party the signal to help themselves. Consequently, on the 12th of April, the very day after the decree which gave forced currency to the *assignats*, a Section appeared at the bar of the Convention to demand a lower fixed tariff for flour and bread, wood and candles, meat and wine, sugar and coffee. Meantime, for the purpose of intimidating the Convention and exciting the mob, the cry was raised that a famine was impending; the baker's shops were plundered, and the people called on by the street orators to rise in rebellion. The Gironde, who, curiously enough, considered Marat as the most dangerous of their enemies, replied to this petition by impeaching his inflammatory articles in the journals;[1] whereupon the Municipality accepted the challenge and sent a large deputation, with great solemnity and form, to accuse 22 Girondists of high treason. These blows pretty nearly neutralised each other, as the Convention, on the 20th, rejected the charges of the Hôtel de Ville as an unfounded calumny; and the revolutionary tribunal, on the 24th, after an almost comical trial, acquitted the friend of the people, Marat, with fervent veneration.

Of still greater importance than these demonstrations was the ultimatum respecting the price of corn which the Parisian party brought forward on the 18th. This time it was the departmental Council which declared to the Convention that the fruits of the ground, like the light of heaven, were the common property of all men; and that public opinion was decided, in accordance with these principles, on the following points: — That the price of corn should be fixed at 25—30 francs: that a register of all stocks should be drawn up: that the trade in corn should be annihilated, and no one allowed to act as agent between the producer and consumer. Vergniaud and Buzot energetically opposed the proclamation of this system with warnings and reproaches, whereupon

[1] Valazé explains the motives for this step to his constituents, April 14. (Papers of the Committee of Public Safety.)

the orators of the Departments threatened them with a revolt of a million starving men. In the evening Chaumette administered an oath to his applauding followers to continue in a state of revolution until the people had cheap provisions, and to consider themselves attacked as a body on the first prosecution of a patriotic citizen. The excitement of this scene spread through all the Sections, and more especially among the Jacobins. Robespierre brought forward — at first in the Jacobin club, and then in the Convention — that draft of the "Rights of Man" in which he produced the before-mentioned programme for a general war, endeavoured to express the communistic wishes which it contained in the least offensive manner, and to refer them to settled principles. While he allowed property to exist in name, he declared that the employment of it was subject to the power of the State, and that all property was unlawful and immoral which injured the possessions or the freedom of another. Although all the claims of the proletaries may be deduced from these propositions, the Jacobins were by no means satisfied with a theory which did not allow every individual to put his hand into his neighbours' purse, but only gave to the State the disposal of private property; and Boyssel excited immense enthusiasm when—immediately after Robespierre's "Rights of Man" — he proclaimed the right of the Sansculottes to the use and enjoyment of all the fruits of the earth — the right to clothe and feed themselves, and to propagate the race of Sansculottes. Supported by these sentiments, the Mountain, on the 18th, began the final discussion on the propositions of the Department. It soon became evident, on this occasion, as during the king's trial, that the contest would not be carried on by arguments but by external force. Addresses poured in from all sides, mobs of threatening and wretched appearance were conducted into the hall, and the replies of the Girondists were drowned in the roar of the galleries. Fresh leaven of excitement was thrown into the Convention from the pro-

vinces, when the patriots of Montpellier reported that, in consequence of the violation of the frontier by a small Spanish corps, they had taken upon themselves to make an additional levy of 5,000 men, and for this purpose had raised a forced loan of five millions from their wealthy fellow-citizens. The Convention ordered that this report should be sent to the other departments as a manifestation of patriotic sentiments; whereupon Danton, who was at that time on rather bad terms with the Jacobins on account of his foreign policy, took the opportunity of winning back their favour in another field, by declaring that the resolution of the Convention was a formal recognition of the proceedings in Montpellier, and a summons to imitate them. The municipality did not need to have these directions repeated. They resolved without delay to raise 12,000 men, *à la Montpellier*, for the war against La Vendée, and to defray the expenses by a forced loan of twelve millions from the wealthy inhabitants of the capital. The men were to be selected by the revolutionary committees, which gave the Hôtel de Ville a guarantee that none but opponents of their policy, and, moreover, opponents capable of bearing arms, would be chosen, by which means the last strength of the moderate party would be removed from the capital, never to return.

The object now was to impose at once a fixed price of corn on the rural districts, a compulsory loan on the towns, and military exile on all the parties hostile to the Jacobins. To prevent all attemps at resistance on the part of the Convention, the old furnace of revolution, the Faubourg St. Antoine, was once more heated red-hot. More than 8,000 petitioners from this quarter appeared at the bar of the Convention on the 1st of May. "Make sacrifices," cried their spokesman, "as the people has done. Let the majority forget that they belong to the class of proprietors. Decree a fixed price of corn, and then tear up all unfair leases. Let every one who possesses more than 2,000 livres a year

contribute the half of the surplus to the expenses of the war and the relief of the poor. If you reject these wholesome and necessary measures, know that the people is in a state of insurrection." These last words raised a storm of indignation in the Right, and a tumult within and without the hall; and at last their meaning was in some degree palliated and explained away. Nevertheless the demonstration had its effect, and, on the 2nd, the Convention decreed a maximum price of corn; first, the average price since January, and then a gradual fall till September; and, lastly, several restrictions were laid on the trade in corn. The decisive step was taken towards the omnipotence of the State over property and trade.

These enactments concerned the agriculturists; on the following day the turn of the Parisian Bourgeois came, when the municipality published its resolutions concerning the forced loan. All incomes above 1,500 livres were to contribute in increasing rates, so that 1,000 livres would pay 30 livres, and 3,000 livres, 100 livres; but as for incomes above 30,000 livres, all the surplus was to fall to the commune — one third within forty-eight hours, another after fourteen days, and the remaining third at the end of the month. All this was to be done by order of the revolutionary committee and on pain of confiscation of property. Hereupon messages and instructions poured in from the Hôtel de Ville to the Sections, the revolutionary committees met, and began to enrol one of their neighbours as a recruit, to demand of another a few hundred, and of a third a few thousand, livres, as a contribution. Their delight at the golden harvest after so easy a victory was boundless.

But they had to learn that the real contest was still to be fought. As early as the 1st of May, a few young men, waiters, clerks and shopmen, who were taken as recruits, had attempted violent resistance; and when preparations were made to carry out the forced loan, the turn, upon which the Gironde had founded all their hopes, took place.

The mass of the Bourgeois, who for the last two years had kept aloof from politics, in order to look after their own individual safety, suddenly became aware to what this caution had brought them. They saw that from out of the party feuds to which they were utterly indifferent, had proceeded a ruinous onslaught upon the life and property of every individual; they perceived the danger, heard the tumult in the Sections, and came forth one after the other to defend their property and lives. All at once the aspect of the sectional assemblies was changed, so that the Jacobins hardly knew themselves there. The Bourgeois asked by what authority the committees took away money from their neighbours, who had just as many rights as themselves? by what kind of standard they selected the recruits? why quiet men of business were to be sent into the field, while 3,000 troops of the line, and the Fédérés, were idly and mutinously lounging about the Parisian pavé? A hundred voices soon gave the answer; they were to be sent away for this very reason, that the robbers and beggars might have a clear course; every where it was roundly declared, that according to such rules as these, not a man would pay, not a man would march.[1]

The Democrats were beside themselves with surprise and fury, and sought in every possible way to regain a majority in the Sections. Municipality and Jacobins, the Sister club and the Cordéliers, were in constant deliberation. Chaumette threatened blood and destruction, the police dispersed the meetings just as they were about to draw up petitions to the Convention, and within forty-eight hours more than 2,000 men were put into confinement. Exactly in the tone of the Hôtel de Ville, Robespierre cried out to the Jacobins: "The great conspiracy has broken out; whoever wears gold braid on his trowsers is the natural enemy of the Sansculottes; we must form an army of these last in Paris to

[1] *Adolf Schmidt*, Tableaux I, 166.

combat the aristocrats, and maintain all the poor of the Republic from the treasury, at the cost of the rich."

In fact the democratic party encountered during this week the greatest and most sensible danger which could possibly befall it — the rising, not merely of the few political party men, but of the heavy mass of the quiet population. If this state of things continued, the Jacobins would see their best weapons, the Sections, pass into the hands of their opponents; their armed bands were already afraid to show themselves before the excited and zealous national guard, and an overwhelming force, ready for immediate action, voluntarily presented itself to the hands of the Gironde.[1] Disquieting intelligence also was received from the provinces, where the same indignation was gradually goading the Bourgeois to action. The Sections in Marseilles had just assumed the management of affairs again, sent the commissioners out of the city, and disarmed the Fédérés, whom the commissioners had summoned to their aid. Bordeaux, at the exhortation of the Gironde, prepared to send a body of men to Paris to protect the Convention. In Lyons the opposing parties threatened every moment to come into collision; several departments of Normandy sent violent manifestoes to the Convention against the agitators. The fate of the Jacobins depended on their anticipating the union and consolidation of all these hostile elements, calming the momentary excitement in Paris, and then with all possible speed dealing the death-blow to the Gironde, which now formed the centre of the moderate party. The Jacobin chiefs with great dexterity chose out the elements suited to their purpose from the existing crisis, in order to attain their end by suddenly doubling, under pretence of yielding.

The object of the new plan was to continue the recruit-

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[1] Attempts have since been made to detract from the importance of this movement in the Sections; but the transactions of the Commune, the Department, and the Convention, prove beyond a doubt how much was at stake.

ing, indeed, but no longer to employ it as a means of exiling hostile citizens, but of arming democratic battalions. Their destination was still to be La Vendée, but the Jacobins intended to employ their arms, before they marched out, in a coup d'état against the Gironde. The levying of the forced loan was therefore postponed — no one was compelled to enter the battalions, but, on the contrary, only volunteers were received.[1] At the same time the municipality, on the 13th, decreed the raising of an army of Sansculottes in addition to the forces destined for La Vendée, and, on the 17th, arbitrarily appointed a fanatical Jacobin named Boulanger commander of the national guard in the room of Santerre, who was to lead the Parisian contingent against La Vendée. Several thousand proletaries were quickly armed, of a character exactly suited to the wishes of the municipality — needy men, who, on account of the cost of their equipment alone, would be unable to leave Paris for some weeks, and who were ready in the interval for any undertaking against aristocrats, Girondists and capitalists. Their leaders hastened to cut out their work for them. A certain Henriot, a servant up to 1789, then a custom-house officer, and lastly a police spy, who had been dismissed from all these places for theft, had risen into notice since September as a patriotic executioner, and become commander of the national guard in the Section of the Sansculottes. This man held forth to the volunteers, day after day, that they must not leave Paris until they had overthrown the Gironde and tamed the aristocrats. Varlet enlarged on the same subject in the Section of the corn market; other crowds collected round Maillard, under the name of "Defenders of the invincible Republic;" and the Sister club resolved, "as the time of fine speeches was over," to form a battalion of Amazons. Meanwhile the municipality assembled deputies from all the Sections at the Hôtel de Ville, who were to prepare

[1] Report of the department to the Convention, May 8th.

beforehand a list of the arrests which would be necessary in Paris. They also established a revolutionary committee in the episcopal palace, to form the visible rallying-point of the revolt on the decisive day.[1] All this was done with noisy publicity, as if it were a harmless or justifiable measure; and all Paris knew that in a few days the Democrats would rise, slay all unpopular persons, after the manner of September, and thus once more "save their country"!

This was the position of affairs in the first half of May, when Payne was writing about the destructive consequences of democratic disorders, when Danton was deeply engaged in his negotiations with Sweden and Russia, and the Committee of Public Safety was coming to terms with Stael, drawing up Semonville's instructions, and sending Custine to Belgium. If the municipality prevailed, it was all over with these plans, partly from the principles of the Parisian party, who refused to treat with any king, or to leave any neighbouring country undisturbed; and partly on account of the persons who were engaged in the above-mentioned affairs, who, for various reasons, were in the highest degree odious to the Jacobins. Custine's intercession would have been sufficient of itself to decide them in favour of an open breach. Danton recognised the difficulties of the moment, and was ready to begin the contest with them. Undismayed by his former failures, he made one more attempt at a reconciliation with the Girondists, and succeeded in bringing about a great meeting with them in the pleasure gardens of Sceaux.[2] The conference began with a luxurious banquet under the stately trees of the park. Politics were not brought forward at first, but instead of them the champagne flowed in streams: the ladies present were not of the number of the *prudish* beauties of Paris, and for the moment all dif-

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[1] Unpublished report of the mayor to the Committe of Public Safety, June 1st. — [2] Touchard-Lafosse, "Vergniaud," p. 65 (German translation).

ferences were forgotten in the intoxication of pleasure. But no sooner had the men proceeded after dinner to serious conversation, than old and incurable wounds opened afresh. As in the previous March, it was Guadet who replied to Danton's first proposal — amnesty for the past — by a decided and unconditional refusal. Vergniaud thought this neither humane nor wise, but was too indolent to bring over his hotheaded colleague to his own opinion; and thus, after a brief and hopeless discussion, they separated without having come to any agreement. Danton was deeply moved. Several times did he secretly send proposals to his opponents, and on the 10th May he even publicly voted with them in the Convention, on one of the most important points in the new Constitution — whether the government should be named by the people, or by the legislative body — but it was all in vain. "Twenty times," said Danton, in a despairing tone to a friend a few months later, "twenty times did I offer peace, but they rejected me, that they might destroy me; they alone have brought this mob-rule upon us, which has consumed them and will consume us all."[1]

It is true that the mob-rule which sent them to the scaffold might perhaps have been averted by an alliance. And yet Danton did them injustice when he imputed their refusal solely to personal hatred; their position at that time had more to do with it than their mere feelings. For after they had placed themselves at the head of the Bourgeois, had inscribed the words "security and property" on their banner, and sought new strength in the attachment of the middle classes, all cooperation with Danton, the leader of the September assassins, the originator of the last outrages in Paris, was utterly impossible. And thus it was their fate, by their very struggle for law and order, to cut away the last rope that could have saved them, and to make the fullest

[1] Garat, in Buchez, 18, 451.

atonement for their own evil deeds, in sealing their own destruction by their very conversion to the cause of right. They had at least one consolation — they could fall with a purified conscience, after a vigorous struggle. But what shall we say of Danton's position? He had once more to learn that for him there was no forgiving or forgetting. Though he despised his associates, and destroyed his former work, he was bound to them with iron fetters. He had but one choice, either to mount the scaffold, after the triumph of the good cause, or to proceed in his old courses in the full consciousness of his own turpitude. He had not yet strength to die; he resolved to hold fast to life and crime.

In the little town of Charenton, about a mile from Paris, he held a nocturnal conference with Pache, Robespierre, Henriot and other associates of the city party.[1] The democratic camp in Paris was in a state of the greatest excitement; murderous plans of every kind were discussed among the Cordéliers, in the episcopal palace, and the Hôtel de Ville; and at Charenton, too, a blow *à la* September against several hundred deputies was repeatedly proposed.[2] Danton at any rate opposed these extreme measures with all his might,[3] and finally carried his more moderate proposals. It was still desirable, even for the Democrats, to avoid doing open violence to the Convention, as such, and in its stead to extort[4] a decree against the Gironde from the representatives of the nation by threats and intimidation, as formerly against

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[1] Garat, in his Memoirs, tries to throw doubt on these deliberations, but they are proved not only by a deposition made to the Commission of twelve, but also by Cambon, Barère, Guyton and Delmas; all of them members of the Committee of Public Safety. Conv. Nat. 12, Vend. I., Brum. 4 et 7, Germ. III. Moreover Garat says, on another occasion (p. 450); *Danton a été l'auteur de ses journées, plusieurs les voulaient, seul il a pu les faire.* — [2] Barère in the Convention 4. Germ. III. — [3] Leclerc in the club of Cordéliers, June 27, 1793 (Buchez 28, 520). Legendre in the Convention 7. Germ. III. — [4] Lamaignant C. N. 7. Germ. III.

King Louis. At this moment, it is true, the tools which they had hitherto used, viz. the Sections, were not at their disposal; and as long as the citizen, whether deliberating or armed, had the upper hand, the success of a massacre on a large scale must always appear doubtful. The suppression of the Sections, therefore, was proposed as the first task, and immediately commenced with the greatest vigour. The patriots bestirred themselves in all quarters of the city, but in the present violent excitement among the Bourgeois, they made but little progress. The municipality were all the more active in preparing for the worst; they fabricated daggers and pikes where muskets were wanting, and detained the battalions which were marching out against La Vendée at Courbevoie, a short distance from Paris. But the decisive moment was brought on sooner than they expected, by their opponents.

From the hurry and bustle with which these preparations were carried on it was impossible that they should long remain concealed from the Gironde. By the 12th of May, Mazuyer had sent an exact account of what was going on to the Committee of Public Safety,[1] whose members, between their fear of Danton on the one side and the majority of the Convention on the other, could come to no resolution. On the 18th Guadet openly brought the subject of the conspiracy before the Convention, and moved the suppression of the rebellious authorities of the city. Barère endeavoured to parry this sharp blow by proposing that the Convention should appoint a Commission of twelve members to investigate all the decrees which had lately been issued by the Commune. Nothing, of course, would have been found in the minutes concerning the murderous plots, and Danton especially would have got off scot free. But the Gironde followed up their advantage, and added a clause to Barère's motion, that the investigations of the Twelve should be

[1] Papers of the Committee of Public Safety.

extended to all machinations against public order.[1] In the selection of the commission they carried their most zealous members, who set to work at once, and, as was to be expected, plenty of material poured in upon them from every side. As early as the 24th they forbade the nocturnal assemblies of the Sections on the authority of the Convention, and deprived Boulanger of the command of the national guard. On the following night the darling of the street democracy, Hebert, and immediately afterwards Varlet, with three associates worthy of him, were arrested.

And thus the destruction of one of the two parties was rendered unavoidable; Hebert was privy to all the plots, the three others were the chief agents for their execution, and the Jacobins were lost if they did not get the start of their opponents. They no longer hesitated in the Sections; every thing depended on their carrying the adoption of an imperious petition in favour of Hebert within twenty-four hours; and where arguments had no effect, they made no scruple of resorting to force. In those Sections in which the patriots had not a majority, they attacked the unprepared Bourgeois with fists and sticks, chased them in wild confusion out of the assembly, and then voted their sovereign petition under the protection of the city police.[2] In spite of this, however, the mayor was only able to demand the liberation of Hebert, and the dissolution of the commission, in the name of twenty-eight Sections. The rest had again to be done by tumult. A swarm of Fédérés, Amazons, and *tape-durs* suddenly broke into the hall, and noisily mingled with the deputies of the Mountain; and in the midst of the turmoil Danton's friend Herault, as president, declared that the Convention had granted the demands of the Sections. But the exultation caused by this success was of no long duration, since on

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[1] "*Vos amendements liberticides*" cried Bazire to the Gironde on May 31th. — Conf. the expressions of Saladin, Buchez 28, 37. — [2] Protocol of the commune, May 26. Jacobin club *eodem.*

their very next sitting, the Convention, though they passed over the liberation of Hebert, declared the resolutions of the preceding day null and void, restored thereby the Commission of twelve, and renewed the threats of legal steps against the Jacobins. The latter were determined to proceed to every extremity. Hebert, in his exasperation, incited the Cordéliers, in the midst of the Convention, to the immediate massacre of the Girondists. Danton's friends with some difficulty prevented this, but the Central committee of insurrection in the episcopal palace resolved, on the strength of their previous success in the Sections, to proceed to the execution of the plot of Charenton.

The Committee of Public Safety, as well as the ministers, were fully aware of these proceedings. Both bodies, however, were divided and without leaders, most of their members uncertain as to their own wishes, full of apprehensions of the Hôtel de Ville, but, at the same time, of anger and suspicion against the Gironde. To increase the general embarrassment and terror the most alarming tidings arrived from the theatre of war. The peasants of La Vendeé, who had been masters of that province since the beginning of the month, had gained a complete victory over General Chalbos at Fontenay, on the 25th, and threatened to pass the Loire at several points. In Belgium, again, Coburg had at last received his reinforcements, had driven the French Army of the north from its camp at Famars on the 23st, and had ever since that day blockaded the important city of Valenciennes on every side. In the Convention the government spoke of these disasters with contemptuous pride, but in their secret hearts they were so terrified, that Lebrun entrusted proposals of peace for the Austrian government to a Saxon diplomatist — who was just then starting for Paris[1] — on

[1] Haeften to the States General, June 8th. It was the secretary of Count Salmour, Saxon ambassador at the Court of Louis XVI., who had been left behind.

the basis of restoring all conquests, and compensating the German princes; nay, the Committee of Public Safety meditated offering to the emperor the liberation of the unhappy Marie Antoinette, if he would withdraw his heavy hand from the Republic. With such sentiments, the commonest consistency would have forced upon these rulers a decided co-operation with the Gironde, if Barère and his associates had ever regarded principle or the public good, or indeed anything but their own selfish interests. But though they were in no little fear of the Austrians, there was a nearer danger arising from the hatred of the Gironde, and a still nearer in the daggers of the *tape-durs*. And thus the Committee had continually wavered during the last few weeks. As late as the 18th Barère had hinted clearly enough that the disposal of the armed force must be taken out of the hands of the municipality; and yet, on the 20th, Camthon, in entire conformity with the views of the Hôtel de Ville, had procured a decree for levying a compulsory loan on all the wealthy inhabitants of France. Their course, however, was at last decided by their jealousy of the new Committee of twelve, in which they apprehended a rising Girondist government, and on the 20th they formally broke with the Gironde, and astonished the Convention by proposing that the latter should allow them (the Committee of Public Safety) to add five members to their number, who should be commissioned to lay the foundation of the future Constitution. That there might be no doubt of the meaning of this proposition, they designated for this function, on the 30th, the Dantonist Herault, Robespierre's most intimate friends St. Just and Couthon, and, in addition to these, two zealous Jacobins, Ramel and Mathieu. It was now certain that the Gironde would meet with as little aid from the Committee as from the Hôtel de Ville.

And now the struggle was at hand. The plan was to proceed in the same way as on the 10th of August, and in the first place to form a provisional government at the

Hôtel de Ville by commissioners of the Sections, who should act on behalf of the sovereign people with unlimited powers. On the night of the 30th of May the nomination of these commissioners took place in twenty-nine Sections;[1] at 3 o'clock the tocsin began to sound, and three hours afterwards the commissioners took possession of the Hôtel de Ville. Henriot was named commander of the national guard; the call to arms was sounded in every quarter; the mails were stopped, the letters seized, a day's wages of 40 sous offered to every proletary; and, lastly, an act of impeachment against thirty-four Girondists — which was the main business of the day — was drawn up. The conspirators hoped by endless patrols throughout the great city, to keep the citizens — who hastened to their rendezvous for the most part in utter ignorance of the occasion of the tumult — far away from the Convention, and then, by means of the furious raging of the well-filled galleries, to carry the motion for the arrest of the proscribed victims. At first every thing proceeded according to their wishes. The Left first rose in the Convention to denounce the Committee of twelve, who for three hours strove in vain to get a hearing in their own defence, and at last declared themselves ready to transfer all their powers to the Committee of Public Safety. But in the afternoon the position of affairs underwent a very serious change. With all his arts of agitation Henriot could not at last prevent the question as to the cause of the revolt from being raised among continually increasing masses of the citizens. One Section after another came to an understanding on the subject; some of them sent commissioners to the Hôtel de Ville to watch the proceedings there, and others even to demand an account of them. In the Section Contrat-Social the national guard threatened to fire on the

[1] This was the number of Sections by whom the deputation to the Convention was empowered. The protocol of the Commune exaggerates the number to thirty-three.

patriots;[1] and at last the Sections 1792, Butte-des-moulins, Mail, and Gardes Françaises, resolved without further circumlocution[2] to occupy the Palais Royal with their battalion and guns, and to take up a decided position there for the purpose of protecting the Convention, and overawing the Hotel de Ville. The effect soon showed itself in the Tuileries. Vergniaud declared that the Parisian section had deserved well of the country; Camboulas carried a motion for a criminal charge against Henriot, and the Committee of Public Safety returned to its attitude of mediator by demanding, through Barère, that "the Twelve" should be suppressed, and at the same time that the armed force should be placed under the exclusive control of the Convention.[3] The Hôtel de Ville, however, was not to be intimidated so easily. While their great deputation, accompanied by a raging and threating mob, were entering the Convention to bring forward their accusation against the Twelve, the ministers Roland, Claviere and Lebrun, and twenty-two Girondist deputies—Henriot was bringing up 10,000 men with a powerful artillery from the Faubourg St. Antoine against the Palais Royal,[4] under the false pretence that the Butte des-Moulins had mounted the white cockade. The preponderance was thus restored to the Left in the Convention itself; Robespierre got the motion rescinded which deprived the Hôtel de Ville of the disposal of the armed force, and of Barère's demands only the one for the dissolution of the Committee of twelve was acceded to. The Mountain regarded the day as won, and were on the point of at last opening the discussion on the main question — the proscription of the Girondists. But suddenly a fresh crowd — and this time a peaceable and rejoicing one — appeared at the bar of the Assembly, with

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[1] Protocol of the Commune, June 1st. — [2] Conv. Nat. May 31st. Buchez 27, 352. — [3] Conf. his statement on the 4. Germ. III. — [4] About 5 o'clock in the evening. Vid. Gorsas; and the anonymuos writer in the supplement to Meillan's *Memoires.*

the intelligence that the men of St. Antoine had convinced themselves in the Palais Royal of the sound republicanism of their opponents; embraces and fraternization had taken the place of blood-shedding, and the Bourgeois were now accompanying their comrades back to their Faubourg with music and floating banners. Under these circumstances it was impossible for the Convention to occupy itself with prosecution and impeachment, and the sitting broke up to all appearance amidst general harmony and reconciliation.

The rage of the municipal assembly at this turn of affairs was unspeakable. The very first proceeding of the four Sections had aroused a strong feeling of anger among the Jacobins at the mismanagement of the committee which had hitherto conducted their affairs; they immediately dissolved it, and supplied its place by 25 other members.[1] In the evening Hebert represented that the impatience of previous schemers had imperilled everything; that the causes of failure ought to be explained to the people, who should be made to understand that what was not completed to-day might be done to-morrow.[2] This was fully resolved upon; they must, it was said, after having gone so far, force their way through all difficulties, or perish in the attempt. They entertained nothing but the bitterest anger against time-servers of Danton's stamp, who had excluded armed force from their programme; and the new committee set to work to carry out their objects, regardless of all considerations. In that very same night they procured a decree from the municipality for the arrest of all the citizens who had taken part in the reactionary movement.[3] This order was forthwith carried out in all the Sections in the early morning of the 10th of June, and continued during the whole of the day. They had

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[1] Report of the mayor to the Committee of Public Safety, June 1st. — [2] Protocol of the Commune, May 31st. — [3] Mentioned in a proclamation made at the Hôtel de Ville at 6. o'clock A. M. Protocol of the Commune, June 1th.

marked the orators and ringleaders in the battalions, and could feel sure that during their incarceration no fresh rising of the masses would take place. In the next place messengers were despatched in all secrecy to Courbevoie, to recall the battalion which had been raised for the war against La Vendée (about 12,000 men) to Paris. With their aid, they thought, if it came to the worst, all opposition might be drowned in the blood of their opponents, whatever Danton might say to the contrary, To please him, indeed, the Hôtel de Ville made one more attempt in the evening to obtain from the Convention the immediate impeachment of the Gironde. But when, in spite of the absence of nearly the whole Right, the Centre and the Dantonists rejected the proposition as premature, the signal was given by the Committee of twenty-five, immediately after midnight, for the last decisive blow.

On the 2nd of June, in the early dawn, the clanging of the alarm bells once more commenced, while the columns from Courbevoie, provided with a powerful artillery entered the city, and at first took up their position on the northern Boulevard. The Sections were not yet quite put down; the assembly of the Section Fraternité was dispersed in the middle of the night; Marseilles and Théatre Français were overpowered in the course of the forenoon.[1] The arrests were continued in all quarters;[2] the most important printing-offices occupied,[3] the *messageries* and *barrières* closed, and the issue of passports prohibited. When this had been done, a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville repaired to the Convention for the purpose of enforcing the will of the people by a final unalterable command. Their demands were, indeed, somewhat mitigated; they no longer asked for an

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[1] Protocol of the Commune, June 2nd. Debates of the Convention, 21. Ventose III. [2] *Chronique de Paris*, June 2nd (Buchez, 27, 411.) [3] Gorsas' house not till after midday, Buchez, 28, 19.

act of impeachment, but only for the provisional arrest of twenty-seven Girondists as suspicious persons; but this was to be carried into effect without delay, without curtailment, and by every available means.

Meanwhile the ministers in one part of the Tuileries, and the Committee of Public Safety in another, were deliberating on the great question of the day.[1] Of the former, Clavière, who had been arrested during the night, was missing; of the latter, Danton, whose intentions had been outstripped by events.[2] After long deliberation, the remaining members came to a resolution to make one motion in the Convention for the voluntary retirement of the Gironde, and another for hiring 6000 proletaries as a Parisian army of the Revolution, with the view of curbing the impetuosity of the Parisian party. But the latter had already made further progress. When the deputation of the Hôtel de Ville appeared with their command for the proscription of the Gironde, Billaud-Varennes demanded that it should be referred to the committee *for immediate report;* but the Convention decreed its reference to the committee without the additional clause, upon which the Commune at once broke off all negotiations which could lead to peace. On a signal of Henriot the battalions of Courbevoie occupied the external approaches of the Tuileries, and the men who had hitherto filled the gallery hastened, with the cry of "*aux armes!*" to block up the doors of the hall. They had all received instructions not to allow either minister or deputy to withdraw until further orders: the Convention were not to be allowed to

[1] Marat, Dufourny and Lhuillier had informed the Committee of the views of the Hôtel de Ville. Lindet in the Conv. Nat. 1. Brum. III.

[2] According to the minutes of the sitting. Guyton and Delmar were also absent; Treilhard was there. This disposes of Garat's report (Buchez 18, 408). Danton's offer to give himself up to the Gironde as a hostage, which has been repeated a hundred times on Garat's authority, cannot at any rate, have been made here.

leave the place until they had delivered up the proscribed members to the Commune. In order to preclude any deliberation in the Sections, the battalions of the national guard were posted in military order far away on the quays of the Seine, for the alleged purpose of protecting the Convention.

In the hall the debate turned exclusively on the one absorbing subject. The din of the rabble and the rattle of arms was heard from the lobbies; and some of the deputies, thrust back from the doors, interrupted the proceedings with useless complaints. At last Barère brought up the report of the committee. While this was being commented upon with disfavour by both sides, Lacroix rushed into the hall with torn garments, beside himself with rage; he, too, the confidant of Danton, who till the preceding day had been a leader of the movement, had been maltreated and driven back into the hall. All his friends, the members of the Committee, the Centre and the Right rose up together, and Barère demanded the execution of the commander of the national guard, who had dared to violate the majesty of the Convention. On the motion of Lacroix the Convention ordered the troops to retire; on that of Danton, they decreed an investigation by the Committee of Public Safety. But the Parisian party treated these commands as idle words, and all the approaches remained closed. Barère then made a last attempt, and suddenly proposed that the Convention should break up in a body with the president at their head in order to test their freedom. An unanimous shout of assent was raised at the proposal, and the deputies began to move, with the exception of about a hundred *Montagnards*, who remained in their seats with irresolute curiosity. The others got as far as the main entrance of the palace, where Henriot, slightly intoxicated, was stationed in front of a battery of democratic gunners. He answered the address of the president with brutal ribaldry, and after the exchange of a few words drove the crowd of men, who called themselves the representatives of France, back into the palace,

by the word of command *"aux canons!* Wherever the Convention tried their fortune in the garden, they fared no better; and they soon allowed themselves to be led back into the hall by Marat, who, surrounded by a troop of *gamins*, marched triumphantly along.

All resistance was was thus broken down. On the motion of Couthon, the list of victims was read out—while Marat now struck out a name here, and added another there—and the immediate arrest of the proscribed was ordered. When the latter, one after the other, came down to the bar, and delivered themselves up to the gensd'armes, the Convention in humble silence submitted to the commands of the victors, unanimously decreed the formation of the revolutionary army of Paris, and empowered the committee to draw up a laudatory account of the great day. The Gironde was defeated; their political career for ever ended; this day decided their fate as completely as the 10th of August that of the monarchy. Hurled from the very height of political power by a bold stroke of their opponents, they went like Louis XVI, first into mild and decent confinement, to experience within a few months brutal imprisonment and death upon the block. But the victors, who had scarcely held together during the tumult of the contest, separated in enmity as on the 10th of August, in the very moment of victory. The immediate result to France of the 2nd of June was a new struggle between the democratic factions for the spoils of the vanquished—a feud which filled up a whole year, and was not ended until all the leaders of that day's outrage had mounted the scaffold.

CHAPTER IV.

SHELVING OF DANTON.

Significance of June 2nd.—Revolt of Marseilles, Lyons, Bordeaux and Bretagne against the Jacobins.—Ferment among the bourgeois of Paris.—The Jacobins temporise.—Constitution of 1793.—The committee of public safety tries negotiation with the departments.—It adheres to a policy of peace with foreign countries.—Protects Custine and Biron against the democrats.—Melancholy condition of the army of the north.—Danton wishes to save the queen.—Fall of the committee of public safety.—War against Marseilles and Lyons.—Persecution of the Girondists Custine and Biron.—Fall of Mayence and Valenciennes.—The queen before the revolutionary tribunal.—Warlike spirit of the new committee of public safety.

The first step of the victorious Commune, as soon as the result obtained in the Convention on the evening of the 2nd of June had been announced, and the triumphant enthusiasm somewhat cooled down, was a decree to the following purport: that the revolutionary army should be organised that very week—the *maximum* carried into effect—and the levying of the forced loan commenced. On the following day the Commune appointed a committee to promote cheapness of provisions, and to draw up lists of the stocks in the hands of the Parisian bakers. The debates in the Jacobin club were equally explicit. On the 3d the Capuchin Chabot declared amid general applause, that the time was come for setting a fixed price on bread throughout the whole kingdom, and immediately proclaiming a new constitution, with the right to maintenance as basis, and the certainty for all men of procuring food, as principal object. The younger Robespierre called for the suppression of the

bad journals, since, he said, the freedom of the press must not be allowed to injure the liberty of the people. Billaud-Varennes laid open the whole programme of the club a few days later; punishment of the guilty generals—dismissal of the aristocratic officers—expulsion of strangers—disarming of lukewarm, and incarceration of suspected, citizens—progressive taxation and compulsory loans for the maintenance of the poor—formation of a revolutionary army for the annihilation of all internal enemies. The French nation, therefore, was not left long in doubt as to the significance of the recent *coup d'état;* the men of September once more raised their blood-drenched banner over the trembling land.

Yet the more sagacious among them felt that though they had indeed stormed the citadel of the State by a sudden attack, there were still many difficulties to be overcome, before the conquest of France could be regarded as accomplished. Resistance of every kind was rife in the provinces, in the metropolitan Sections, and even in the government itself; so that the Commune, Robespierre, and Danton, with equal zeal, exhorted their followers to caution and patience, in order not to conjure up all dangers at once against the chiefs of the party.

Even before the 31st of May, a lively opposition had arisen in some Departments against the tyranny of the Democrats. Marseilles, as we have seen, had several weeks before closed its Jacobin club, brought its leaders before a special tribunal as robbers and murderers, and expelled the Commissioners of the Convention from the city. The storm broke out in Lyons on the 14th of May, when the commissioners, the municipality, and the Jacobins, had joined in decreeing a forced loan of six million livres, a levy of troops destined for La Vendée, and the arming of 4,000 proletaries as an abiding garrison for the city.

In the levying of the compulsory loan all the richer inhabitants were shamelessly plundered; the obnoxious or influential citizens were enrolled in the corps which was

destined to march away, and the September bands and Challier's dreaded myrmidons in that which was to remain in the city.

Challier himself had promised the club, on the 27th, that after two days the rich egoists, the presidents and secretaries of the Sections, should all be beheaded; and as the municipality surrounded the Hôtel de Ville with artillery on the 28th, no one any longer doubted that this threat was uttered in good earnest.[1] The citizens therefore came to the resolution rather to fall in open combat, than allow themselves to be butchered unresistingly.

The Sections declared themselves *en permanence;* the contest began on the 29th, and after raging through the streets for several hours, amidst the heavy fire of artillery, was decided in favour of the Bourgeois, after about 200 patriots had fallen. The victors occupied the Hôtel de Ville, dispersed the municipality, and arrested Challier and his most important friends; and the Conventional commissioners, being divided amongst themselves, did not dare to oppose the popular will. This movement had just as little political signification as that in Marseilles; there was still no idea of hostility to the Republic or the Convention, but only of personal defence against general plunder and a renewal of the September massacres.

At the same time the departments of Bretagne, at the opposite side of France, and with essentially different views, declared themselves against the Jacobins. A civil war between the town and country populations had raged throughout that province during the months of March and April. The peasants, influenced by the same feelings as the men of La Vendée, resisted the great conscription, declaring that they would defend house and land against all enemies, but would not leave their homes; they did not conceal their attachment to royalty, and demanded that the

[1] Cadillot to Robespierre, in Buchez, 30, 422.

deposed clergy, who were reverenced both by young and old, should be restored to them. When the national guards of the towns were summoned to enforce the law, a struggle arose, which, though of short duration, was carried on in every corner of the land; the rude brutality of the peasants excited a lively indignation amongst the townspeople, and in the beginning of May the revolt was quickly suppressed in every [1] direction.

The result in the towns was, that the party feuds which prevailed in every other part of France were entirely suppressed; nothing was heard of Jacobin machinations against the Bourgeois, and the middle classes were rendered in the highest degree enthusiastic for the Convention by the contest which they had undertaken in its favour. No sooner, therefore, did they hear of the revolt of the Parisian authorities against the national representatives, than the cry, first raised in Finisterre, spread rapidly through all the districts of the province, that all rebels against the nation, Jacobins as well as royalists, must be made to feel the weight of the Breton arm, and several battalions of volunteer national guards assembled to march to Paris for the protection of the Convention.

Under these circumstances the events of the 2nd of June naturally produced a very powerful effect. It widened the breach between the hostile parties, and greatly increased the number of the opponents of the Jacobins. Foremost of these was the rich and influential city of Bordeaux, which had always regarded its eloquent deputies with pride, and now, loudly declaring that it would liberate them from their illegal imprisonment, decreed the equipment of a force sufficient for that purpose. Meanwhile some of the deputies had escaped from their confinement, which was at that time by no means strict, and hurried away, some to Lyons and others to Bretagne and Normandy, in order to extend the movement

[1] Conf. Duchatellier, *Histoire de la revolution de Bretagne*, Vol. 2.

and give it the necessary unity. They were everywhere received with open arms. The class of proprietors in Normandy had always been moderate in their views, and being royalists at the bottom of their hearts, were little inclined to put up with the despotism of extreme democracy. The citizens of the Jura, the Aisne, and the upper Loire, gathered round Lyons; Montpellier, Toulouse, Nismes, and the greater part of Provence, united themselves with Marseilles; and Bordeaux headed the towns of Guienne, Quercy and Perigord. The Jacobin clubs were everywhere closed, and their leaders subjected to judicial examination; the lists of their members were destroyed, the committees and authorities appointed by the March commissioners abolished, the public monies seized and placed under the management of the great land-owners, who were also entrusted with the command of the military force which was in course of formation. It is true, indeed, that the military portion of the enterprise, although the only vital one, made but slow progress. The whole movement was in fact purely civil, and the most zealous leaders, therefore, were not likely from their age, their wealth, and the nature of their occupation, to be of a particularly warlike character. The most vigorous part of their national guard was fully employed in controlling the proletaries, who had also been roused to fanaticism in the revolted districts in favour of the Jacobins; consequently only a small number of men could be spared for the expedition against Paris. Still less confidence could be placed in the peasants, who, in Bretagne, had just suffered such bloody defeats from the towns, and who, in the South, were either enthusiastic catholics, like the Vendeans, or had been made zealous communists, like the Parisians, by misery and hunger. Nothing remained to the towns therefore but to raise mercenary battalions, for which officers must first be procured, and new resources, connexions and organizations created; and lastly there was an entire want of unity and supreme control over all the provinces, as well as of a po-

litical bond to keep together the different parties, who, for the present, only agreed in their abhorrence of the Jacobins. In short, the success of the moderate party in an armed collision was from the very beginning by no means certain. As, however, the government also was, for the moment, entirely unprepared, the general movement of the country placed the Jacobins in the greatest danger.

Meanwhile the Sections of the capital were no less active than the Departments. In spite of the violence done to the Convention, in spite of all the arrests—the number of which amounted to more than 1,300—there was a never-ending ferment among the citizens. The Commune had daily to contend against their [1] opposition. More than one Section dissolved its revolutionary committee, others refused to allow the Jacobins to speak in the assembly, and a particularly serious agitation arose against the equipment of the 6,000 Sansculottes. It was of no avail that the Municipality sent commissioners with unlimited powers, that an arbitrary police employed every means in their power, that the patriots of the democratic sections marched through all the others in turn, in order to overwhelm their opponents in each by the weight of numbers. In twenty-seven—i. e. in the majority of the sections—a strong resolution was passed against the new revolutionary army, as a source of military tyranny, so that the municipality found itself obliged for the present actually to postpone its formation. This was doubly disagreeable to them, because many of their most active and useful partisans had marched to La Vendée with the battalions of the last levy, immediately after the 2nd of June, by which the ranks of the *tape-durs* had been greatly thinned; and the municipality felt more deeply than ever the necessity of a new recruitment. Under these circumstances the Bourgeois raised

[1] Protocol of the commune, 2. 4. 8. 10. 12th of June.

their voices more and more loudly, and when the news arrived from Bretagne, several of the Sections no longer attempted to conceal their sympathy and joy. "Everywhere," cried Hebert, "the public feeling is bad; everywhere we have to crush the germs of reaction." The position of affairs seemed so critical, that Robespierre was against sending any more troops to La Vendée, in order not to risk the possession of the capital; and both Danton and Hebert agreed with him not to say a single word for the present on the tenderest point of the whole question—that of property. The compulsory loans, the fixed tariffs, the laws against usury, as well as the creation of a revolutionary army, were postponed to a more favourable moment. If they had come forward with these measures now, they would have had to fear a revolt of the Sections, and then a combined movement of Paris and the united provinces, by which they would all have been hopelessly overwhelmed. They resolved, therefore, to play a cautious game, and to save their hatred and their wrath, their avarice and their violence, for a more favourable moment.

Their chief concern was to gain over the mass of the undecided and timid by a grand liberal programme, and thoroughly to clear themselves, during the crisis, from the reproach of ambition and love of plunder. They used as a means to this end the original task of the Convention—the preparation of the new constitution. As long as the Gironde remained influential, the Jacobins had violently opposed every step in this direction; it now lay in their own interest rapidly to push forward the work and to throw back the reproach of delay in the teeth of the conquered party. Danton's friend, Herault-Sechelles, was commissioned to draw up a new scheme, which he laid before the Assembly on the 10th of June; and on the 24th the discussion concerning it, which was carried on with restless haste, was brought to a close. As the object was not to produce a law which could really be carried out, but only one which should gain

over popular opinion, its contents were as practically [1] immature, and at the same time as little Jacobin as possible; a caricature, in fact, of the principles of 1789, which left all important functions to the decision of every individual Frenchman, and consequently appeared to discard every appearance of arbitrary rule. In the declaration of the rights of man, they wisely left Condorcet's clause respecting property almost unaltered, and merely added the proposition, that society was bound to support the poor either by work or alms. In regard to foreign policy they added, with equal conciseness, to Danton's dictum—that France adhered to the system of non-intervention — the declaration of Marat, that all free peoples are friends and allies.

Before this manifesto, however, could produce the expected effect on the French people, its authors had to pass through an unforeseen and dangerous interlude in Paris. In drawing up this document they had the liberal feeling of the mass of the population so exclusively before their eyes, that they had entirely lost sight for the moment of the aspirations of their faithful proletaries, and they were now affected in the most painful manner by the surprise of the latter—who were at first confounded, and then filled with wrath, by the apparent treachery of their leaders. The poor creatures had so often received assurances of cheap goods and guaranteed wages—they were so sure of the victory of their cause after the triumph of the 2nd of June—that they were utterly unable to explain such a complete disappointment. Some of the inferior agents of the Hôtel de Ville—a certain Leclerc from Lyons, the priest Roux, and the street orator Varlet—

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[1] Herault wrote to his friend Desaulnays: *Chargé avec quatre de mes collègues de préparer pour Lundi un plan de Constitution, je vous prie de nous procurer sur-le-champ les lois de Minos, qui doivent se trouver dans un recueil de lois Grecques: nous en avons un besoin urgent.* According to the facsimile in the "*Isographie des hommes célèbres*" printed in the Quarterly Review, 93. 310.

who considered themselves as insufficiently rewarded for their past exertions, and thought themselves at least as good as Hebert or Robespierre, added fuel to the flames, gained over the club of Cordéliers and some of the Sections, and appeared before the Convention on the 25th, to reproach the Mountain with their breach of promise, and to demand the insertion of a law of usury, or of compulsory sale, in the new Constitution.[1] When the Mountain—who had no intention of allowing themselves to be outdone in the eyes of the proletaries, or of throwing off the mask before the time—drove them away with ridicule and abuse; when the municipality, on the 26th, in like manner passed over their dangerous petition, on the motion of Hebert, to the "order of the day," the mob called to mind the 25th of February, and the principles propounded by Hebert at that time, and for the space of two days plundered the ships in the quays, and the shops in the neighbouring streets. Embarrassing as these proceedings were to the rulers, they did not venture to call out the national guard against their old associates; but they contented themselves with gaining over the club of Cordéliers to their more cautious views, through the influence of the Jacobins, and thereby depriving the new demagogues of their most important organ. A sum of money from the civil treasury allayed the disturbance of the proletaries for the moment, and the proclamation of the new fundamental law was made in Paris without further difficulty.

This result was generally agreeable to the Committee of Public Safety. The majority of that body were rejoiced at the defeat of the communistic agitation, and had yet taken

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[1] The debates of the Convention, the municipality and the Cordéliers, leave no doubt of the character of this movement. It is easier to understand that Robespierre and Hebert found it convenient to brand the rioters as a new fraction of the *enragés*, than that modern enquirers should have seriously sought for the particular principles and programme of this party.

so much part in the 31st of May that they sympathised in the wish of the Jacobins to rally the whole of France round the banner of the new Constitution, round the Convention and the Committee, in opposition to the Girondists. As early as the 25th they despatched couriers in all directions, to lay the law before the assembled people in the Departments, for their vote and approval; and they had soon the satisfaction of receiving a favourable answer from a number of different places. It was not possible, of course, to get in this way at the towns and provinces which were already in a state of revolt; and concerning the treatment of these the views of the Parisian rulers differed very widely.

The majority of the Committee were decidedly in favour of adopting mild measures. They were so for every conceivable reason—personal conviction, abhorrence of civil war, jealousy against the Commune, and regard for the opinion of foreign countries. It was only too evident that in three-fourths of France neither the clubs nor the authorities possessed sufficient power to put down the revolt of the Bourgeoisie. If the government, therefore, resorted to force, it had no other weapon than the armies, for which, indeed, the Bourgeois would certainly be no match. But it was not in itself a thing to be calmly contemplated by the men of the Revolution,—to call out the military power against the people, for the first time since 1789; and in addition to this there was the danger of foreign invasion, to which the employment of troops at home would necessarily open the way. The Committee therefore determined to negotiate, and, if possible, to reconcile; and in order to gain over the middle classes, they brought forward a motion in the Convention, on the 7th of June, to appoint a new commander of the Parisian national guard in the place of Henriot, and to dissolve the detested revolutionary committees throughout the whole of France. But the democratic party justly regarded this proposition as an open declaration of war; Robespierre declared that the adoption of this motion would once more

rouse the Sections so lately quieted; and the Convention had been so intimidated by the blow received on the 2nd, that Barère himself withdrew his motion, and Robespierre carried a solemn declaration on the 13th, that the Commune and the people of Paris had deserved well of their country on the 2nd of June. Meanwhile the Committee had sent off three of its members, Robert Lindet to Lyons, Matthieu and Treilhard to Bordeaux, and some secret agents to Normandy, to enter into negociations with the revolted cities, and, if possible, to prevent the outbreak of open war. Lindet, who found an avowed Girondist and republican at the head of the police committee in Lyons, was the first to return, and briefly reported, that as long as the movement retained its present character, freedom had much cause for watchfulness but none for fear. This expression referred to the fact, that the government of Lyons, though constantly avowing republican opinions, gathered round it for the moment all who sympathised with their immediate object—the destruction of the Jacobins; and that, consequently, a number of monarchical elements were to be found in the Lyonese authorities and national guards. The consequence was that though in the future this city might become the centre of a powerful opposition, yet for the moment the Girondists possessed but little influence. Lyons, in fact, manifested not the slightest interest in the party questions of the Convention, and put no other device upon their banners than safety and and property.[1] As long, therefore, as the government separated itself in some degree from the Jacobins, there remained a small possibility of reconciliation; the city avoided all direct manifestations of hostility; allowed e. g. transports of horses and arms to pass without hindrance to the army of the Alps, and gave the Conventional commissioners a safe and honourable reception. The Committee would have been heartily glad, on its part, to come to terms, and to

[1] From the official documents in Guillon de Montléon, Chap. VII.

grant the Lyonese an amnesty for their revolt, and liberty to manage their internal affairs, in return for an acknowledgment of the Convention as the legitimate government of the land. But in the face of the more zealous members of its party, the Committee did not dare to take any open step in this direction; they were incessantly and vehemently urged by Dubois-Crancé and others to interfere by force of arms, and it was with difficulty that they deferred the discussion on this point from day to day.[1]

The popular feeling in Bordeaux was more ardent and passionate than in Lyons, because the former entered with greater zeal into the contest in behalf of the Girondists, and was determined not to acknowledge the authority of the Convention until it had recalled the imprisoned deputies to their seats. The envoys of the Committee, therefore, were surrounded with guards, and after some feeble attempts at negotiation banished from the city. Yet this ardour was not backed by such lasting endurance as in Lyons. The sons of the rich citizens paraded in splendid uniforms as a mounted national guard, but there was nowhere any trace of an inclination to enter upon the serious duties of war. The same may be said, with still greater truth, of Bretagne and Normandy; the movement produced a great number of speeches and pamphlets, some money, but hardly any troops. The middle class in Normandy held constitutional opinions, but the fugitive Girondists were loud in their expressions of republican zeal, and thought to brand the Jacobins most deeply by calling them concealed royalists. Under these circumstances the Bourgeois saw little reason to risk their lives in supporting the democrat Buzot against the democrat Robespierre, and the call to arms had so little effect, that the heads of the Department were obliged to hire the so-called *Carabots*—a plundering and cowardly crew, which had been originally organised and armed by the Jacobins—for

[1] Report of Merlin von Thionville. Conv. nat. Oct. 23nd 1793.

their war against the Convention.[1] The shortsighted zeal of the Girondists had an equally bad effect on the conduct of their armed force. General Wimpfen held the military command of the province at that time; in 1792 he had defended Thionville against the Germans, and for some months past had commanded the so-called "army of the coasts of Cherbourg," which for the present consisted of himself and his two adjutants. He was a strong minded and moderate man, a liberal royalist in his political opinions, full of disgust at the disturbances of the Parisian mob, and consequently very willing to place himself at the head of the Breton forces. But he very soon convinced himself of the practical incapacity of his new associates, and at last plainly told the Girondists, that if they did not wish to perish immediately, they must invoke the aid of England. They loudly inveighed against this proposition, rejected his proposal with patriotic indignation, and from that time kept a watchful and suspicious eye upon the general. He returned their distrust with interest, and in order not to lose sight of them, remained behind at Caen when the column of Carabots began their march towards Paris and advanced as far as Vernon on the Seine; where they were soon afterwards dispersed by a handful of Parisian gensd'armes, almost without firing a shot. In such a state of weakness and disunion, the agents of the Committee of Public Safety, who operated by means of speeches and pamphlets, promises and threats, and, above all, great masses of *assignats*, had an easy task.[2] At the beginning of July, the Committee was already assured of the submission of these provinces.

In spite of the 2nd of June the Committee of Public Safety endeavoured to maintain a similar position in war and

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[1] Conf. Vaultier et Mancel, *l'insurrection normande*, Caen 1858. [2] The papers of the Committee of Public Safety furnish us with a great number of proofs of this.

diplomacy to that which they had already taken up at home. They adhered to the wish to carry on the war according to a reasonable plan and with definite views, although the difficulty of such a course was greatly enhanced by the *coup d'état* of the Commune. Which of the European courts would like to treat with Marat and Henriot? And what French minister, *without risking his life, could have proposed to the Commune an alliance with a king?* Lebrun *himself, on account, as was alleged, of his above-mentioned inclination* to peace, had been arrested on the 2nd, and the Swedish Ambassador had left Paris for Switzerland in despair. Nevertheless the Committee sought at any rate to keep the clue in their hands, and made use of the first few weeks, (during which Lebrun, in spite of his imprisonment, conducted the business until the appointment of his successor), to send off several diplomatic agents who were initiated into their views, and more especially to accredit Desportes at the court of Stuttgart. When the answer to Lebrun's question of the 6th of April arrived from London, to the effect, that no French envoy could be received in England, and that all overtures should be addressed to the head-quarters of the Duke of York, the Committee ordered the minister to draw up the necessary instructions for such a negotiation—whether it were for a separate treaty with England, or for a congress of all the belligerent powers. The Committee would have joyfully concluded a peace upon any tolerable conditions; always provided that the Parisian democrats did not send them to the scaffold for their pains.

When, under the influence of these sentiments, the Committee had entrusted the command of their most important army to General Custine, they soon afterwards appointed a friend of his, General Beauharnais, chief of the army of the Rhine; and that pattern of a liberal nobleman, General Biron, commander on the third most important theatre of war—La Vendée. Not one of these officers was a considerable general, and they had all a strong vein of hazardous ad-

venture in their characters, but they were on that very account all the more suitable tools of the utterly foolhardy diplomacy of their chiefs in the Committee. Custine was as innocent of political convictions as Biron or Beauharnais, but with all their republican love of freedom, they were still cavaliers and soldiers to the back-bone, and zealously cultivated discipline, honour, and military pride, among their troops. This was sufficient to bring them into irreconcileable feud with the democrats of the capital; Robespierre in the Jacobin club, and Hebert in his journal, were inexhaustible in their charges against the aristocratic generals; and the expulsion of all quondam noblemen from the armies soon became the loudest cry of the Parisian party. Bouchotte, minister at war, obedient to every beck of the Hôtel de Ville, and entirely guided by his chief secretary Vincent, a bosom friend of Hebert, caused the lampoons of Hebert to be circulated by millions in all the camps, by means of his own commissioners.[1] He also protected every soldier in his mutinous conduct towards an officer, without considering the fatal consequences of such a vile proceeding in the face of an advancing enemy. The generals, irritated to the utmost, overwhelmed the Committee of Public Safety with their complaints, and the latter—who, though they no longer ventured to carry out Custine's first plan of sending the army of the Moselle to Flanders, considered the general necessary to them both for war and negotiation—did not hesitate a moment to proceed against Bouchotte. They announced to the Convention, on the 13th of June, that Bouchotte had sent in his resignation, and proposed General Beauharnais as his successor. The Convention sanctioned

[1] Bouchotte himself states, that from April 1793, 1,200,000 livres were spent for this object in rather less than a year; that 1,118,800 of this sum were paid to Hebert, and the rest to seven other journalists, and that 1,118,800 copies were circulated of the Pere Duchesne alone. Buchez, 31, 236.

the proposal, but the patriots immediately raised such a violent storm, that Beauharnais did not dare to accept the nomination, and Bouchotte remained as firmly fixed in his post as ever. The decided predominance of the Parisian party was proved about the same time by the filling up of the vacancies left by the ministers who were arrested on the 2nd of June: Lebrun was succeeded by Desforgues, lately a subordinate of Bouchotte, and consequently a democrat of the first water; and Destournelles, one of the most zealous members of the revolutionary municipality, succeeded Clavière as minister of finance. The anarchical intrigues of the democrats were carried on in the military department with ever-increasing zeal.

The consequences manifested themselves in a terrible manner in all the theatres of war. The revolt of La Vendée, especially, carried on with unbounded enthusiasm and opposed with infinite confusion, daily increased in extent and strength. Charette, formerly a naval lieutenant, ruled over the marsh land of the coast from Nantes to Sables d'Olonne. In the interior the waggoner Catelineau—the Saint of Anjou, as the peasants were accustomed to call him on account of his ardent enthusiasm—had nearly 40,000 men under arms, with which force he drove the republicans out of the country south of the Loire, and threatened the nearest districts of Anjou and Maine at several points. Opposed to him stood General Boulard on the coast, with 12,000 men, near Sables d'Olonne, and General Canclaux, with an equal force, at Nantes; both these divisions consisted of good troops, but were hardly strong enough to cut off the enemy from the sea, where perhaps they might enter into communication with England. On the land side, Biron had to stand the brunt of the enemy's attack with an army which contained at most about 18,000 serviceable soldiers. The remainder consisted of hastily raised national guards from the neighbouring districts, young and wretchedly armed recruits, and, lastly, the Parisian volunteers under Santerre—men who filled

the country with their excesses, and the camp with their lawlessness; who in every battle ran away at the first shot, and often carried the other divisions with them.[1] Biron vainly endeavoured to control them or to send them away, since Bouchotte's commissioner, Ronsin, constantly protected and encouraged them in the name of the minister; and when Biron had procured an order from one of the numerous Conventional commissioners, Ronsin easily got a counter-order from another. It was fortunate for the Convention that the peasants, with all their heroic devotion, were just as little capable of steady perseverance and regularity as their enemies; the character of this partial war was made up on both sides of daring surprises, furious onslaughts, local defeats, and unexpected reappearances, without either party being able to gain any decisive advantage. When at last, at the end of the month, the Vendéans collected their whole force for an attack upon Nantes, Canclaux repulsed their tumultuary bands at the weakly barricaded entrances of the town by a steadily conducted fire from the houses and hedges. They were, however, so far from being destroyed by this disaster, that General Westermann, who had just dispersed an army of peasants by a bold irruption into the interior, was immediately afterwards furiously attacked, and driven back with great bloodshed. This last blow brought the confusion at head-quarters to a crisis. Immediately after the battle Westermann learned that a favourite of Ronsin, named Rossignol, a dissolute goldsmith of Paris, who, as a September assassin, had gained a claim to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, was rousing an assembly of soldiers in a public-house to robbery and insubordination. Biron, encouraged by a letter from the Committee of Public Safety, which had

[1] Conf. Barère's report July 26th according to the orders of Committee of Public Safety: *c'est le royalisme qui, dans Paris, a fait lever ces héros à cinq cents livres* (the levy of the middle of May), *la honte de l'armée; ils sont lâches, fuyards, indisciplinés et pillards.*

arrived shortly before, and which praised him and exhorted him to perseverance, caused the mutineer to be arrested in the very act and handed over to a court-martial. Ronsin hastened to Paris to save his friend, and there was greater quiet in the camp; but Vincent and Hebert, the Jacobins and the Commune, united in a furious cry for the annihilation of the shameless and liberticidal generals.

The condition of affairs in the Army of the north, in Flanders, was exactly similar. On his arrival Custine found the main body, after the loss of Famars, in the so-called Cæsar's camp, near Bouchain on the Scheldt, in number about 39,000—of whom 10,000 had no muskets, 6,000 more no bayonets,—5,000 cavalry and, in all, 147 artillerymen.[1] Moreover the officers were without authority, and the men without discipline, and both without courage or self-reliance; and they continually received denunciations from Paris, which taught them to look at the treachery of the generals as the sole source of every disaster. A second corps of 36,000 men, which was stationed at Lille, under General Omoran, was in no better case; while the Ardennes army (from Maubeuge to Longwy), after sending off large contingents to La Vendée, counted at most 10,000 men, chiefly newly-arrived national guards. In order to raise the forces to these numbers, so many men had been drawn from the garrisons of the fortresses, that, e. g. Lequesnoi retained only 1,600 men, Landrecies 1,100 men within its walls; a weakness of force all the more dangerous, because the majority of the fortresses were just as little in a state of defence as in the previous September. In the above-mentioned places fortifications were raised in the sight of the enemy; the works of Bouchain and Rocroy were in a state of utter ruin, and Cambrai and Lille were only provisioned for a few weeks. The administration of Pache and Bouchotte,

[1] This and the following statements are derived from the correspondence of the war ministry.

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or, in other words, the capture of the war ministry by the Mountain, had brought this most important frontier to a state of utter defencelessness. In the face of these facts, what becomes of the boasted glory of the Mountain, that it tyrannised over France, indeed, but at any rate saved her from foreign enemies?

But we may go further than this. Thanks to the measures of the Jacobins, the public feeling of these border lands,—which even in March had been thoroughly patriotic,—had by this time undergone a radical change. This new evil was owing to the conduct of the conventional commissioners during the great conscription, and also to the law of the maximum. The commissioners in these districts, like their brethren in Paris and Lyons, had, with brutal partiality, and under the influence of the clubs, kept back the radical proletaries in the cities, in order to control the latter, and sent off the respectable bourgeois from their business to the battalions. As to the maximum law, the peasants declared they would rather eat their oats themselves than let them go at such a price; and Lille, on this account, could not be supplied with provisions until July, when Carnot, on his own responsibility, suspended the operation of this pernicious enactment. In all quarters the inhabitants had learned to look at the occupation of their country by the Austrians, not as a national misfortune, but as a deliverance from famine and destruction. It is due to Custine and the Committee to say that they did their utmost to rescue the army from this horrible state. Custine began, on the 5th of June, by issuing a general order, in which he threatened deserters, mutineers, and ringleaders, with immediate death.[1] A few examples

[1] Bouchotte blames this order on the 1st of July as utterly inconsistent with the spirit of republican armies; "A free man," he said "must carry out his commands among his brethren not by inspiring terror but confidence." On his own part, Custine wrote several times, that he should always admonish an ignorant Minister; that he was republican enough not to take a dunce for a god, even though he were a Minister, &c.

showed that he was in earnest; he was, moreover, equally strict with the officers, indefatigable in providing for and training his forces; and the soldiers, though they grumbled at first, soon saw that he was in the right, and began themselves to seize and deliver up the Parisian envoys. At the same time the Committee exerted itself to reinforce the army. The levy of March began to bear its fruits; by the end of June, the camp of Cæsar counted 55,000 men, the Ardennes army 29,000, and a new levy of 30,000 cavalry was actively going on. It is true that when the patriots of the capital talked of relieving Valenciennes, and demanded Custine's head for his dilatoriness in carrying out their wishes, the general could only shrug his shoulders with angry pity. He was quite contented to accustom his troops to warlike confidence by petty engagements between the outposts, and thanked Heaven that his powerful opponents allowed him leisure for this slow training of his men. And thus the troops of the line, at least, gradually regained some degree of steadiness; among the volunteers, however, Hebert's journals and Bouchotte's intrigues kept up the anarchical spirit, until Custine at last, like Westermann, made short work of them, and caused the commissioners of the minister to be arrested and confined.[1] As a matter of course the Jacobins were from this moment perfectly convinced of his infamous treachery.

The Committee of Public Safety, whose position was painfully embarrassed by such a breach between the minister and the general, could not avoid seeing the danger which must arise, if, in the midst of this quarrel, Valenciennes should

[1] A certain Cellier made himself particularly conspicuous; some of the battalions protected him, and after his arrest he wrote to Billaud-Varennes and Hebert, by whose influence he was liberated. The constant complaint against Custine is that this "*Général-moustache*" was in the habit of abusing Robespierre, &c.: there is no talk of his holding communications with the Austrians.

fall and the Austrians attack the army. Custine had declared in the most decided manner, that the place could not yet be relieved: the war seemed almost hopeless, and peace further removed than ever. The answer to the note which had been sent to Austria at the end of May had arrived: it was to the effect that it was impossible to negotiate with a country of which no one knew the actual government. [1] In this position the Committee resolved to make a last attempt. The ambassadors Semonville and Maret were just starting for Constantinople and Naples: they were both directed—as the sea was blockaded by the allied fleets—to pass through Switzerland and North Italy, and they now received secret despatches to Florence, Naples and Venice, in which an offer was made to these States of the life of the imprisoned queen, if they would for the future keep the peace with France. [2] Danton was no stranger to this step, [3] but neither he nor his colleagues were in a position to guarantee the safety of the queen. At any rate they might hope that the above-mentioned courts would not come to a decision without consulting the emperor of Germany, and that then the hostilities on the part of the Austrians would be somewhat relaxed.

But at the time when the Committee adopted these extraordinary measures, the hours of its rule were numbered. It was no especial disaster, no individual hatred, no personal dislike, which brought about its fall; it was the general position of affairs which rendered its continuance impossible. It had staked its existence on mediation and compromise, but the time of half measures was irrevocably passed. The

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[1] Haeften to the States General of Holland, June 8th. [2] Durozoir in the *Biographie universelle*, 73, 104, according to a note of Maret, the existence of which is also confirmed by Ch. de Sor, in *Le Duc de Bassano*, page 67. That Maret, in 1797, at Lille, did not mention the circumstance to Malmesbury (diary III, 483) is no proof to the contrary. [3] Mallet du Pan, *Mémoires* II. 63.

Jacobins had laden themselves with such a mass of crime, that they could not spare the lives of any of their opponents without the most deadly apprehensions for their own. This dreadful consequence of sin was displayed in the most glaring colours both in the affair of the generals and of the revolted cities. If they did not succeed in sending Custine and Biron to the scaffold, a criminal charge of mutiny, robbery and every kind of maladministration, would continually hang over the heads of Bouchotte's agents, the darlings of the Parisian democracy. If the cities were not reduced to unconditional submission, the heads of the patriots of Lyons, Marseilles and Bordeaux must inevitably fall; for they were all standing before irritated judges on a charge of public butchery, murderous plots, and illegal exactions. This antagonism allowed of no solution or reconciliation. The Convention, at the imperious demand of the Commune and the Jacobin club, had given orders for the liberation of all oppressed "patriots," with the threat of severe punishment in case of non-compliance. But to the desperate and revengeful population of Lyons, this appeared like a sentence of death against themselves—like the setting free of untameable beasts of prey. Challier's trial, therefore, was zealously carried on in spite of all the decrees of the Convention; the arming of the people was accelerated, and an avowed royalist, Perrin de Precy, was placed at the head of the army of Bourgeois. The reaction upon Paris was not long in shewing itself. The Jacobins were furious against the Committee, which had allowed things to come to such a pass by its criminal mildness; and the latter did not cling very tenaciously to power, the maintenance of which, in the road on which they had entered, was no longer possible. In this state of affairs the final decision, as far as we can see, was brought about by the long-expected and much discussed report of the Committee respecting the delinquencies and fate of the Girondists. The report itself had been drawn up by St. Just, who, however,

was forced by the majority of the Committee [1] to make several alterations; it was proposed that only the fugitive deputies, nine in number, who had openly taken part in the rebellion, should be proscribed; five others impeached, and the rest recalled to the Convention. Such was the proposition made to the Convention by St. Just, on the 8th of July, in the name of the Committee; it appeared to the genuine Jacobins both a bitter mockery and a mortal danger to their party, and the decree was postponed at their instigation. They would have nothing more to do with a Committee which recalled half their enemies from the steps of the scaffold to their arm chairs in the Convention.

As the powers of the Committee expired on the 10th of July, no noisy attack was needed for its removal: the Convention had only to decree a new election instead of prolonging its authority. The members themselves were partly inclined to favour the change, either from fear of greater persecution, or from the wish not to cut themselves off from public employment for the future. Danton's most intimate friend, Camille Desmoulins, himself brought forward the motion: Barère, who always liked to take the stronger side, openly joined Robespierre on this occasion, and thereby secured his own re-election. Couthon, St. Just, and Robert Lindet, also retained their places; Danton himself, whose conduct became continually more obnoxious to the Jacobins, did not gain a single vote, and found himself represented only by his friends Herault-Sechelles and Thuriot. The three last, Jean-Bon St. André, Prieur and Gasparin, were Jacobins of the first water, so that the Committee,—which had hitherto represented the centre of the Convention, under the leadership of Danton,—had now become the organ of Robespierre with a slight dash of Dantonism. It is not quite clear why Robespierre himself did not enter the new Com-

[1] Protocol of the Committee of Public Safety, June 24th, July 2nd.

mittee; at any rate he was present at its sittings, and when Gasparin sent in his resignation, Robespierre caused himself to be formally elected.

The 10th of July is the second act of the *coup d'état*, which Robespierre and Pache, the Jacobins and the Commune, commenced on the 31st of May. On the 2nd of June they expelled the last, and sometimes effectual, opposition to themselves from the Convention, by the overthrow of the Gironde; on the 10th of July, Robespierre himself took possession of the helm of the State. The tyranny of democratic revolution was now for the first time unreservedly displayed in all its horrors. All that had hitherto kept the Committee of Public Safety in the paths of moderation and mediation —aversion to bloodshed and civil war, regard for the material welfare of the people, for justice or morality, considerations of the danger of foreign invasions—all immediately vanished into air. Perish what might, the new Committee had no other watchword than the unconditional subjection of the country, the utter annihilation of all opponents, and reckless war against Europe. It was not the boldness of a moral resolve which drove them into this dreadful path, it was the timid anxiety of the criminal, who hopes to find a momentary escape from punishment and retribution in the completion of his crime. "Whoever wishes to bear the name of Jacobin," it was said on one occasion during the debates of the club, "must be able to answer the question: *What hast thou done to be hanged, in case of a counter-revolution?*" The men of the 2nd of June, of the 21st of January, of the 2nd of September, had given a triple answer to this question; whoever else besides themselves and their bandits might rise to power—whether Girondists or Constitutionalists, Bourgeois or *emigrés*, Vendéans or foreigners—they could look for nothing but a shameful end. For them there was no safety but in unlimited power; no security for their rule but to reduce the land all around them to a desert. They were rendered foolhardy and bloodthirsty by the fear of death.

In the first place the new Committee did not hesitate for a moment what attitude to assume towards the revolted cities. Normandy and Bretagne, indeed, submitted without further trouble, in consequence of the measures of the late Committee and the flight of the Carabots; but means were immediately employed to reduce the southern provinces by force of arms. Likeminded conventional commissioners, regardless of exposing the French frontier on the side of Piedmont, had already summoned 4,000 men of the army of the Alps to operate against Provence under Carteaux, before whom the national guard of Marseilles withdrew behind their walls almost without a blow. Kellermann himself, commander of the army of the Alps, was ordered to Lyons with 6,000 men,[1] so that 20,000, at most, were left on the frontier to oppose nearly double that number. As, however, this corps was evidently insufficient for the subjugation of the populous and excited city, and as the Lyonese, meanwhile, had openly declared against the *coup d'état* of the 2nd of June, the Committee, on the very first day of its existence, had recourse to a measure which it is difficult to characterise. On the motion of Couthon, the Convention issued a decree, on the 12th of July, which proscribed the leaders of the Lyonese revolt, confiscated to the State the property of all those who partook in it, and decreed the distribution of the booty amongst the patriots of the city and the neighbourhood. The object of this decree is clear from the circumstance, that the conventional commissioners in those provinces raised the peasants against Lyons; Javoques collected 12,000 men in Vivarais; Reverchon 13,000 men in the Upper Saône, Côte d'Or, and the Saône et Loire; and, lastly, Couthon himself, by a written summons, 25,000 men in his native place, Puy-de-Dôme. It was necessary to apply a powerful excitement to bring these bodies of men to actual combat; and there could be no stronger motive than the prospect of

[1] July 14th. Report of Merlin, Oct. 23d 1794.

plundering this wealthy manufacturing city. And thus the new government began their office by hounding on the rude masses to the pillage of citizens who had only taken up arms to protect their lives and persons from a handful of lawless murderers. The city once more offered submission, if the Convention would recall their decrees; but as the tribunal at Lyons had sentenced Challier to death, and actually executed him, there was no chance of a favourable hearing. Dubois-Crancé, the conventional commissioner of the army of the Alps, demanded unconditional surrender; and when this was refused by the Lyonese he immediately commenced hostilities. He made, however, but very little progress before the arrival of the above-mentioned hordes of peasants. Kellermann, meanwhile, had added 8,000 national guards to his battalions; but with these forces he was not even able to form the blockade of the beleaguered town. He himself occupied the road to Geneva, on the right bank of the Rhone, with one column; General Rivas was posted with a second on the left bank of the Saône, on the north of the city; a third, under General Vaubois, stood on the left bank of the Rhone, and immediately began to bombard the quarter which lay nearest to them. But Precy commanded a national guard of 40,000 men and had an arsenal of 300 guns within the city; the roads towards the south-west leading to Forez and Clermont were open for traffic, and the besiegers had to content themselves for the present with maintaining their own position against the constant sallies of the Lyonese. The offensive operations of the republicans came to a complete standstill when general Kellermann was recalled to Savoy by an attack of the Piedmontese; and although he energetically repulsed the foreign enemy, Robespierre declared, in the Jacobin club, that all the fault of the success of the Lyonese rebels lay with Kellermann; whereupon the minister at war immediately decreed the dismissal of the general.

At the same time the signal for bloodshed was given in Paris also in every quarter. On the 13th of July, a young

girl from Caen, named Charlotte Corday, full of enthusiasm for an ideal republic, and filled with indignation against the Parisian demagogues by the fate of the Gironde, presented herself at the house of Marat, "the friend of the people," the darling of the Parisian mob. She gained access to Marat under the pretext of reporting the progress of events in Bretagne, and then stabbed him by a well-aimed blow with a knife. We have already observed that Marat had never exercised a decisive influence on the course of the Revolution. He had risen with the power of the mob, because, in his infinite self-complacency, he possessed the faculty of demanding in all honesty and sincerity, as the undoubted right of the people, all that was usually regarded as insane or criminal—e. g. murder of political opponents, robbery of other people's property, and mutiny of the soldiers against their officers. With no less sincere conviction he then declared himself the only man fitted to be dictator in France, received money from Philip of Orleans—for what ought not to be allowed to the virtuous friend of the people?—furnished his always dirty and disorderly rooms with costly satin furniture, engaged in one vile love affair after another, and incessantly demanded, in ever-increasing numbers, the heads of all corrupters of the people. Such a man could only be a tool in the hands of cooler and wiser leaders. At this period, in July, he was confined by a disgusting malady, laboured under the suspicions of the Jacobins on account of his longing for the dictatorship, and had become a source of annoyance even to his colleagues in the Convention. His death, therefore, could have no real influence on the subsequent course of the Revolution, except by giving the Parisian democrats the opportunity of decking their own lust of murder with the title of just revenge. On the day after his death Billaud-Varennes brought forward a motion to commence criminal proceedings against thirty-two Girondists; two deputies were arrested as alleged accomplices of Charlotte Corday, on the person of one of whom a written protest was found against

the 2nd of June, signed by seventy-three deputies, which from that time forward remained as a standing title of impeachment against the lives of the subscribers. The time had now arrived to come to a conclusion respecting St. Just's report of the 8th, in accordance with the wishes of the new rulers; on the 28th, therefore, the Convention decreed the proscription of twenty Girondist deputies, and the arraignment of nine others before the revolutionary tribunal.

The generals, as well as the Girondists, were made to feel the effects of the change of government. No sooner had the new Committee seized the reins of power than it pronounced the deposition of General Biron on the 11th of July, and summoned him to Paris to answer for his conduct. He was succeeded by the miserable Rossignol, who, however, had the good word of Robespierre, and was commissioned by the Committee — in the first protocol signed by Robespierre — to burn all the houses, hedges and woods, in La Vendée, to cut down the corn, to drive away the cattle, and transport the old men, women, and children into other Departments. The execution of the men was a matter of course: "In two months," said Barère, "La Vendée will cease to exist." Four-and-twenty hours after Biron's dismissal, Custine's turn arrived. The committee, which did not venture to proceed openly against him, on account of the attachment of his troops, sent him orders on the 12th to come to Paris, to take part in an important consultation. On his arrival the news of the fall of Condé had been just received; he was, nevertheless, greeted in the streets by the acclamations of the people; but this was only an additional reason in the eyes of the Committee to hasten his end. On the 22nd the Convention ordered his arrest, "in the interest," they said, "of the public security." Whereupon Ronsin wrote to Vincent: "I congratulate you on the fall of Custine; I contributed somewhat to the overthrow of Biron, and I hope that you will proceed in the same way against Beauharnais and his associates." Bouchotte and

the Commune saw the generals at their feet; the principle of free soldiership with military licence had completely gained the day.

On the same day on which Custine was conducted to prison, Mayence opened its gates to the Prussians. Although the former Committee of Public Safety had by great exertions strengthened the armies of the Moselle and Rhine by nearly 20,000 men, yet the French could not hinder General Kalkreuth from beginning the general assault on the 18th of June, and then continuing the attack by toilsome operations against the outworks. Four weeks later, however, he was still half a league from the principal fortifications, and Beauharnais, who, however slowly and irregularly, was always making some progress, was just on the point of forcing the positions of Brunswick which covered the besiegers, and bringing certain relief to the town. But the relaxation of discipline and the absence of the feeling of honour, bore the same fruits as in every other part of the French army. The troops, who had suffered from want of meat and vegetables, became refractory, although they had still abundance of bread and wine; and the conventional Commissioners were apprehensive for their own personal safety in case of imprisonment.[1] In short, on the 22nd, the capitulation was signed on condition of a safe retreat for the garrison, which was bound not to serve against the allies for the space of a year. The soldiers shouted with joy at the news, and drank bumpers with the Prussians and Hessians, who marched into the town,[2] without any feeling of shame at having surrendered, while all the

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[1] The above-cited Brunswick correspondence speaks of the bribing of the French leaders, but the groundlessness of this suspicion is proved both by the official documents of the Prussian ministry and the statements and letters in Reynaud's life of Merlin, of Thionville.

[2] This is taken from the journals of the men given by Ditfurth *die Hessen in der Champagne u. s. w.*

fortifications remained untouched, and the relieving troops were close at hand. Beauharnais stopped as soon as he received the crushing intelligence, and, well assured of his own condemnation, soon afterwards sent in his resignation, by which however he did not escape the hands of Bouchotte's associates.[1]

The same causes which were in operation here, also led, a few days later, to the fall of Valenciennes. The citizens of this place had for some time longed for the entrance of the imperial troops, and the garrison resisted any continuance of their sufferings, although here, as in Mayence, the main works of the fortress were uninjured, and contained supplies of provisions for a full year. There was, indeed, no hope of relief, for in the camp of Cæsar the report of Custine's arrest had nearly caused a mutiny of the soldiers, and the newly restored bands of order and confidence had been again torn asunder. Consequently, when, on the 25th, the Austrians had succeeded in forcing several of the outworks of Valenciennes, a riot broke out in the place among the soldiers and citizens. The conventional commissioners, who were present, were repeatedly threatened by the raging populace; an agent of the ministers was with difficulty rescued from their hands; and the brave septuagenarian commandant, General Ferrand, being without hope of aid from any quarter, was forced to capitulate. On the first of August, therefore, the Allies occupied the city amid the shouts of the population, which was immediately made to swear fealty, not to Louis XVII., but to the Emperor Francis. The Emigrés in Brussels raised indignant protests

[1] The conventional commissioners attached to the Moselle army immediately sent in indignant reports; St. Cyr was also of opinion that the resistance might have been prolonged. But it was in the interest of the rulers to praise the brave garrison of Mayence, and we therefore read their praises in every quarter. But compare their conduct, e. g., with Wurmser's long and steady defence of Mantua in 1797.

against this proceeding, but the retreating garrison was so thoroughly demoralised, that, on their march into the interior, they raised thundering *vivats* to the Prince of Coburg and the house of Austria, in the public market-place at Soissons.[1]

When this disaster became known in Paris, and it was clear to everybody that Coburg might disperse the shattered army of Cæsar's camp with his superior force, and then march towards Paris without resistance, the Committee had no other thought than how to make the best use of these dangers to excite the passions of their political adherents, and to crush their domestic enemies. On the arrival of the news from Mayence, Custine was brought before the revolutionary tribunal; three more Girondists were impeached; and the number of judges in the criminal tribunal was doubled, with a view to more comprehensive operations. After the fall of Valenciennes the Convention gave orders for the confiscation of all estates in La Vendée belonging to the rebels, the destruction of the church of St. Denis, the arrest of all foreigners living in France, especially the English, whose government, it was alleged, was carrying on the war with fire and murder, and was therefore accursed in the eyes of all the nations of Europe. None of these things, as we need scarcely remark, had any connexion with the loss of the fortresses, or the reinforcement of the armies; if they had any bearing upon the war at all, it was this, that they irrevocably destroyed the last hopes of peace.

Nothing more had been heard for a long time of the negotiation with Prussia. The faction now in power had, as early as June, sent out assassins against the King and the Duke of York; but their murderous plans had been discovered from letters intercepted before Mayence,

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[1] According to the unanimous statements of all the reports of the commissioners and generals.

and happily frustrated.[1] Against England the Committee indulged in a stream of all the abusive words contained in the French language, because a national convention of British democrats had been fixed for September in Edinburgh, and it was wished to give them courage to commence a revolt, by an irreparable breach with the English government. As regards Austria, lastly, those above-mentioned secret instructions to Maret and Semonville decided, just at this moment, the unhappy fate of the imprisoned queen. The fallen Committee of Public Safety, on the very last day of its existence, had the cowardly meanness to inform the Convention of the plot for her liberation—which it had, not indeed initiated, but at any rate favoured—cunningly charged an innocent officer, General Dillon, with the crime, and decreed the separation of the dangerous princess from her son. The Municipality carried out this resolution with triumphant ferocity. Its officers appeared in the middle of the night to announce the order to the unhappy mother, just startled from sleep. A dreadful scene ensued. For more than an hour she offered a desperate resistance to the myrmidons, threw herself upon the boy's bed, and thus protected him with her own person against the assailants. No persuasions, no threats, were of any avail, she would not yield or move; until suddenly one of the men seized her daughter, declaring that he would cut down the girl, if she did not deliver up the son. Then indeed her arms fell powerless, and she allowed one child to be torn from her in order to save the other.[2]

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[1] This correspondence is in the English state paper office; its authenticity is proved by some details concerning Dumouriez, which at that time could be known to only a very few persons. — [2] The commissioners of the commune reported on their part: *La séparation s'est faite avec toute la sensibilité qu'on devait attendre dans cette circonstance, où les magistrats du peuple ont eu tous les égards compatibles avec la sévérité de leurs fonctions.* Louis Blanc, IX. 379, considers the separation as justi-

After this horrible night she could look for nothing worse; in all her further sufferings she had no support but quiet resignation and the certain hope of death. Her persecutors did not allow her to wait long for it. At the end of July the Committee received the intelligence that Semonville and Maret — from whose mission the Powers apprehended revolutionary intrigues in Italy and serious consequences in Constantinople — had been seized on their passage through the Grisons by an Austrian officier, and taken as prisoners to Milan. After their instructions had thus fallen into the hands of Austria, the Committee had to apprehend their untimely publication, and thereupon resolved by an extreme measure to clear themselves of all suspicion of a love of peace and humanity. On the 1st of August they caused the Convention to decree the removal of the queen to the *Conciergerie*, and her trial before the revolutionary tribunal. By thus treating the daughter of Maria Theresa as a common criminal, they cut off for a long period all possibility of negotiation between Austria and the Republic.

War then — incessant, irreconcilable war in every quarter — was the banner which Robespierre waved over France and Europe. And this was done at a moment when the systematic demoralization of the French army had rendered all resistance to a serious attack impossible. The greatly weakened army of the Alps could not have prevented the Austro-Sards, who were nearly twice as numerous, from liberating Lyons. The Republic had no means of securing the coasts of La Vendée from a landing of English troops. For a long time no general at all was to be found for the scattered army of the Rhine, and at last, Carlin, a captain of dragoons, was made commander, and he amused himself with posting his regiments along the frontier in the order of their numbers!

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fied by the circumstance that the Queen, ever since the of death Louis XVI., had treated her son as king, and had, e. g., given the child of eight years old a higher chair than she used herself.

And lastly, on the Flemish border, nothing was needed but a resolute attack of the victorious Austrians to defeat the demoralised troops of Cæsar's camp, to open the shortest road to Paris, and to get a start of several weeks of any reinforcement which could be raised from any quarter whatever.[1] To persevere in such a condition of affairs, to collect every means of resistance, and to choose destruction in preference to submission, appears extremely heroic; but in addition to this, to irritate opponents by a useless crime and vulgar abuse, seems nothing less than insanity. But, in fact, it was not a question of madness or of courage; a portion of the Parisian democrats had no idea at all of the ruined state of their affairs; they only saw their nearest party opponents in the capital, and did not spend a single thought on the far distant forces of the Powers. The government, on the other hand — though they might not know all the particulars of the diplomatic relations between the Powers — were perfectly well informed on the general state of things, and the plans and weak points of the Coalition; so that they had not for a moment any feeling

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[1] Poisson (an old patriotic officer) II. 242: says "*La lenteur des opérations des Alliés, la lenteur avec laquelle ils s'avançaient, et leur manque d'union constituèrent la véritable defense du pays qu'ils voulaient envahir.*" He likewise cites the speech of Marshal Bugeaud in the sitting of the chamber of deputies Jan. 6. 1834, in which that celebrated general enlarges on the insignificance of the services and the want of discipline of the *Volontaires nationaux*, and comes to the conclusion: *ce n'est qu'à Fleurus qu'ils ont commencé à rendre des services: à Jemmappes et à Valmy, les principales forces étaient composées de la vieille armée de ligne . . . C'est le système de guerre que suivaient les étrangers qui a sauvé la France.* We shall presently see that it was owing still more to the discord, than to the military system, of the allies; at all events it was not owing to the terrorising policy of the Jacobins. Even Louis Blanc, IX. 134 (Paris Edition), remarks: *En de telles extrémités la France était perdue, si les gouvernements qui l'attaquaient eussent eu la centième partie du génie et de la valeur que déploya le Comité de salut public.*

of being in serious danger. All that was said of a contrary kind from the rostra, to stir up the mob against the traitors, was coolly calculated bluster. In secret Desforgues continually received reports from his Belgian agents, to the effect that Coburg had given up all idea of marching to Paris, that at head-quarters the Allies had unanimously agreed to confine themselves to the capture of border fortresses; that the Coalition was undermined in every part, and was on the brink of utter dissolution.[1] It was in accordance with these presumptions, that Bouchotte, with the greatest calmness of mind, adopted his measures against the generals, and imperilled the existence of the armies in order to ruin some obnoxious officers. It was with a full sense of security, that the Committee issued its bombastic warlike manifestoes — well aware that it could not carry out its long-prepared schemes of plunder at home, without the pretext of military preparations, nor keep up the necessary agitation among its adherents, without the inflammatory excitement of a state of war.

How correctly the condition of the Powers had been described to the Committee — and how the former gave up their contest with the Revolution at the very moment when the party victory of the Jacobins had, at the same time, destroyed the prospects of peace, and the military strength of France, we have now to relate in detail.

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[1] In addition to the Belgian agents some of the *Chargés d'affaires* in South Germany, and the far-seeing Barthelemy in Switzerland, gave plentiful diplomatic information. To these were added the fruits of bribery. There were at that time highly placed ambassadors of great Powers, who drew fixed pensions from France, and sent regular reports to Paris.

CHAPTER V.

POLISH TROUBLES.

LITHUANIA AND COURLAND PRAY TO BE RECEIVED UNDER RUSSIAN SUZERAINTY. —PARTIES IN THE POLISH DIET.—CATHARINE DEFERS THE PRUSSIAN NEGOTIATION.—RUSSO-POLISH TREATY OF JUNE 22ND.—IMPATIENCE OF PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT.—POLISH DIET REFUSES TO RATIFY PRUSSIAN TREATY.—THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR EXPRESSES HIS CONCURRENCE WITH THE DIET.

WHILE in Western Europe, democracy — undeterred by the hostility of Germany, England, Spain and Italy — was founding its fearful despotism over France, the Empress Catharine in the East, — to all appearance resting calmly upon her own strength, but in secret incessantly advancing — was moving step by step towards her grand object, of subjecting not only the severed provinces, but the whole Polish kingdom. Care was taken that Prussia should gain by the partition neither influence in Poland, nor security in her own share of the booty. And in fact, the wrath of the Poles against Prussia only aided Catharine in involving the rest of the Republic more and more irretrievably in her toils. We have already observed how the elections to the Polish diet were carried on with the cry of obtaining protection against Prussia from the favour of Catharine. When this object had been gained without much difficulty, through the deep demoralisation of the Polish nobles, the Russian agents immediately proceeded to more comprehensive measures. The idea began to gain ground in Lithuania, among a faction of the nobility, of separating this province entirely from the sinking fortunes of Poland; and as early as May envoys from Wilna and other towns,

under the conduct of Kamenski, the palatine of Minsk, came to St. Petersburg to propose the erection of Lithuania into a separate vassal state under the protection of Russia.

A portion of the nobility of Courland went still further. This little territory, the crown of which was nominally held as a fief of Poland, but virtually for the last half century as a fief of Russia, had been disturbed in all its internal arrangements by the movements in Poland since 1791. The duke had heartily joined in the efforts of the Polish constitutional party, had granted new privileges to the corporations of towns, had conceded the right of possessing fiefs to the burghers, and thereby drawn upon himself the bitter hatred of the nobility. Complaints had been sent from both parties to Warsaw, and after a long investigation, an entire reconstruction of the polity of Courland in the direction of liberal monarchy, had been decreed in the beginning of the year 1792. As long as the Polish constitution was maintained, the nobility were obliged to conceal their vexation in submissive silence: but no sooner had the Russian arms gained the mastery in Poland, and the laws of 1791 been trodden in the dust, than they hastened to invoke the august protection of the Russian empress for their own time-honoured privileges and chartered monopolies. The immediate consequence of this step was a short note, by which the secretary of the Russian ambassador at Mittau communicated the orders of Catharine to the representative of the Polish crown of that place, to quit the country within twenty-four hours. It is true that the duke hereupon hastened to send off a submissive embassy to the empress, and to remove all pretext for further violence by restoring the most important privileges of the nobles; but he did not thereby prevent the latter from sending off an agent on their own part to St. Petersburg, who was instructed to counteract the influence of the ducal commissioners. This agent was a Herr von Howe, once a favourite of the duke, but who subsequently underwent a change in his views and feelings. This

man incessantly stole into all the antechambers of St. Petersburg, and though personally despised by the Russian ministers, was petted by them as a useful tool. In fact he extorted from the unhappy duke a sum of 110,000 ducats, which he shared with Suboff and Markoff. Nevertheless, going a step farther than the above-mentioned Lithuanians, he unreservedly declared that there was no salvation for Courland but a formal incorporation with the Russian empire. Catharine, who, out of respect to the European powers, was not inclined openly to go so far, sent him a reproof through Suboff for his thoughtless zeal; yet the vice-chancellor, Ostermann, did not scruple to confess to the Dutch ambassador, that the remaining portion of Poland was "stretching out its neck" to receive the yoke of Catharine, and had already sent in representations to this effect.[1] So far had the cabinet of St. Petersburg got beyond the treaty of partition, five months after the 23rd of January — so clearly did the extension of the Russian frontiers to the Wartha and the Niemen lie before the eyes of the Empress Catharine.

Meanwhile the diet, which was to sanction the cession of territory to the two Powers, commenced its sittings on the 17th of June at Grodno. At the suggestion of Sievers, Count Bilinski was appointed marshal of the assembly; and it was a melancholy sign for the public spirit of its members, that in spite of the shameful task which lay before the diet, there were no less than six competitors for this post of honour. The form of oath by which Bilinski had to bind himself to the fulfilment of his duties, immediately raised a violent contest, which occupied the whole of the first sitting. For whereas, formerly, every Confederation in Poland legally expired with the opening of the diet, the marshal was now called upon to take an oath of fidelity

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[1] Hogguer to the States General of Holland, June 14.

to the league of Targowice, because there was a considerable number of new men among the deputies from whom the old Targowicians apprehended an infringement on their influence, or even prosecution on account of their previous doings. Three days passed in tumultuous discussions before this question was carried in favour of the Targowicians, and it was not until the 20th that the notes handed in by Sievers and Buchholz could be brought before the diet. These two identical documents demanded the nomination of a Committee, which should be empowered to conclude a definitive treaty with the two Powers. Buchholz sent word on this occasion to General Möllendorf that the matter could hardly pass off without disturbance, and that he must therefore hold the army in readiness; but he added, that though the Poles were divided among themselves by jealous feuds, they were already familiar with the idea of partition, and resolved on bringing the matter to a conclusion, that the country might not be altogether ruined by the Russians.

Of this judgment thus much was correct, that the members of the diet were agreed in sacrificing their country, and in every other respect opposed to one another in endless strife. While the Targowicians and the new members regarded one another with deep distrust, there was among both, a strong Russian, and a weak Prussian, party. King Stanislaus and his confidants, on the other hand, still wished at any rate to impede and annoy the partitioning Powers, and therefore sought to draw Austria into the discussion. One portion of the Russian party, with Marshal Bilinsky at its head, looked only to the will of Catharine, and always obeyed the beck of the Russian ambassador. The most influential leader of the Targowicians, on the contrary, Kossakowski, himself a Russian general, entertained a lively jealousy of Sievers, in whose place he wished to rule the country himself under Catharine's protection; he therefore sought to frustrate all his steps in detail, that he might afterwards represent him to the empress as an incapable and unsuc-

cessful diplomatist. In this endeavour he was powerfully supported in St. Petersburg itself by Suboff, who was angry with Sievers for having reported to the empress the extortions of her favourite in Courland. From that time forward Sievers met with perpetual difficulties, more especially when, in addition to the treaty of partition, he aimed at introducing greater order into the Polish government, made proposals for a new constitution, and endeavoured to limit the thievish selfishness of the Kossakowskis and their adherents. Catharine forbade him to undertake any reforms before the conclusion of the treaty of partition, and Suboff protected all the embezzlements and extortions of the Targowicians. "Why do you wish," wrote General Igelström to the ambassador, "to hinder the good Kossakowski from enriching himself at the cost of the Polish state? All former rulers have done so, and all future ones will do so again." And thus Sievers was all-powerful for the oppression of Poland, but utterly unable to remove an aristocratic cutpurse. Kossakowski was able to carry on his operations more fearlessly and openly every day. As, moreover, the inferior deputies wished to extort as high a price as possible for their votes, and the more distinguished determined, for honour's sake, not to sign the partition without the appearance of compulsion, it was certain that an abundance of noise and confusion would yet fill the hall of the diet; but it was also certain that under the form of an historic tragedy, nothing more than a great intriguing comedy would be brought upon the stage.

Immediately after the reading of the two notes all these different views were noisily proclaimed. The king advised that the sympathy of the European powers should be invoked for Poland's misfortunes; the Kossakowski party hoped to avert the partition by appealing to the magnanimity of Russia; and all resolved, for the present, to give a negative answer to the ambassadors. When the latter, hereupon, replied with imperious brevity, that they would not allow

of any evasions, and insisted upon the immediate nomination of the committee, the king succeeded in the first instance in again accrediting General Woyna, an honourable man of decidedly patriotic opinions, at the court of the emperor, and appealing to Austria — as having guaranteed the territory of the Republic after the first Partition in 1775 — for assistance. But the majority was not to be induced to adhere consistently to the course hereby pointed out; and after Marshal Bilinski had brought back the discussion to the main question — the formation of the committee — they at last came to a resolution (by 107 votes to 42), which partook of all the various colours of all the different political parties. The committee was to be appointed; but, in the first place, it was not to treat with Prussia, but only with Russia; secondly, it was to discuss, not the cession of land, but a close alliance with Catharine; and thirdly, the negotiation was to be carried on with the constant co-operation of the Austrian *chargé d'affaires*, Du Caché, as representative of a guaranteeing Power. The last clause proceeded from the royal party; the second contained the favourite idea of Kossakowski — to prevent the partition, by bringing the whole country under the suzerainty of Russia; the first clause expressed the feelings of nearly the whole diet, but originated from a higher source — viz. the Cabinet of St. Petersburg itself.

Catharine, as we know, had submitted to purchase from reluctant Europe the conquest of Poland at the price of a small sacrifice in favour of Prussia. Nor was she able even now to diverge altogether from this course: the treaty of St. Petersburg was already concluded and partially carried out, and Prussia most anxiously avoided giving the empress any pretext for a change of policy. Another consideration was the restless and vacillating conduct of the Austrian minister, who was equally ready to acquire a Polish province for himself, or, if unable to do this, to throw obstacles in the way of Russo-Prussian partition. On the 16th of June

he sent a despatch to St. Petersburgh, in which he brought forward the claim of the Emperor to Cracow, Czenstochau and its neighbourhood, in plain terms, and even proposed, in case of need, a complete partition of Poland. When Catharine did not accede to these proposals, he wrote an urgent exhortation to the Russian government, on the 12th of July, to postpone the partition of Poland — in consideration of the untrustworthiness of Prussia — until the end of the French war. The first effect of these notes was, of course, to strengthen Catharine's resolution to bring her own affairs in Poland to a settlement as quickly as possible. In the next place they revealed to the empress afresh, the whole depth of the gulf by which the two German powers were separated; all danger of a change in affairs which could induce the courts of Vienna and Berlin to take joint steps against Russia was removed to an infinite distance. Under these circumstances Catharine was still resigned to giving up the Polish province to Prussia; but she was all the more resolute in her determination to preserve and manifest her dominant control in every other respect. Poland, therefore, was not to treat with Prussia and Russia on the same footing, at the same time, or in the same document. On the contrary, the cession to Russia was above all things to be made without delay; and then the bargain between the two petty states — i. e. between Poland and Prussia — was to be quickly concluded, or further postponed, according to circumstances. The full powers, consequently, by which Sievers was accredited to the Republic, were drawn up in such a manner that he might carry on the negotiation by himself alone, or in community with the Prussian minister. He had already laid these credentials before the Polish government without the knowledge of Buchholz; and we may imagine with what zeal the former seized upon the possibility of a separate negotiation, which was equally in accordance with the interests of the country and its own hatred towards Prussia. Fully assured, therefore, of Russia's

connivance, the diet was unanimous and energetic in its opposition to all the demands of Prussia.[1]

Under these circumstances very little effect was produced by a note of the 29th, in which the two ambassadors protested against any separation of the Russian and Prussian interests, and repeatedly demanded the appointment of a joint committee. The Poles well knew that Sievers, for the present at least, was not serious in this demand, and many voices were raised in favour of waiting to see the effect of the embassy to Vienna, and the proposal for an alliance with Russia, and of deferring, for the present, any resolution for the prolongation of the diet. As an extraordinary diet, like the present, could only sit, according to the Polish law, for fourteen days, the passing of this motion would have led to the dissolution of the assembly on the 2nd of July. But this was a little too much for Sievers; he threw himself into a violent passion, arrested seven deputies of the royal and Kossikowskian parties, on the 1st of July, sent off a military execution against the estates of Count Tyskiewicz, the king's nephew, and sequestrated all the revenues of the king, for the alleged purpose of satisfying his numerous creditors. He was resolved, he said, to use fire and sword unless Stanislaus yielded, and threatened forced contributions and military violence of every kind in Masovia and Cracow; so that the goodnatured Buchholz, to prevent further mischief, invited the primate of Gnesen to come to Grodno and represent to his brother, the king, the dangers of his position.

It soon appeared, however, that no dangerous flash would follow this thundering bluster. The two chancellors of the diet held a meeting with the ambassadors, and on the 2nd the subsequent proceedings were harmoniously arranged. In

[1] We have here another proof how well-informed the Parisian rulers were of the internal state of the Coalition. The article "Allemagne" in the Moniteur of July 30th gives an almost exhaustive view of Polish affairs.

the first place they agreed upon an answer of the diet to the note of the 29th, to the effect that it had never been contemplated to exclude Prussia from the negotiation altogether. On the other hand it remained fixed that the committee was, for the moment, only empowered to conclude the treaty with Russia. Sievers conceded this point to the Poles immediately; and when Buchholz vehemently protested, he no longer hesitated to avow that this was the express will of the empress, and had always been the command of the Russian government. At the same time he solemnly promised, that immediately after the conclusion of his own treaty he would extort full powers for the settlement of an agreement with Prussia; that he would not allow any other subject to be brought before the diet; and would promote the final arrangement of the affair by every means in his power. Buchholz, although very disagreeably surprised, had no means of resistance, and endeavoured to console himself with the idea that the delay might at least have this advantage, that the Poles would meanwhile cool down, and the affair be all the more rapidly concluded. King Frederick William thought it very vexatious, but said that they must have patience with a woman's vanity; the ministers in Berlin had nothing better to propose, but they conceived a decided distrust in the friendship of Russia, and began to prophecy mischief of every kind.

Sievers now withdrew his severe measures against the Poles, liberated the imprisoned deputies, and allowed them to occupy some sittings of the diet with complaints of his violent interference. Poninski, the nephew of the marshal, brought forward a protest against the arrest of his colleagues; the diet supported him, but the marshal refused to register the motion. Even the appointment of the committee was protracted for several days, partly because many of the deputies wished to suffer apparent compulsion, and partly because Kossakowski was endeavouring to prevent the Russian ambassador from carrying his point too easily. On

the 12th, however, Sievers proceeded to bring the matter to a termination. He threatened, in the first place, to expel all rebels and firebrands from the assembly; secondly, on the 16th, to occupy the estates of all adversaries by Russian troops; and lastly, to sequestrate all the revenues of the State, and to keep back the pay of the Polish troops. This last point would have been sufficient to characterise the whole proceeding, since the Polish treasury had been empty for several months, and no pay had been given to the soldiers since September,[1] so that Sievers' threat was entirely nugatory. The diet, however, considered it sufficient, and after a stormy scene — during which several deputies declared that they would rather go to Siberia — granted the committee the desired powers on the 17th. Sievers was extremely indifferent to the fact that a protest against his violence was added to the resolution, and he laid his treaty before the committee for a sham discussion and unaltered acceptance. By this act Poland ceded the provinces occupied by Russia; in return for which the latter promised her guarantee to the future Polish constitution, full religious freedom for her new subjects, and every possible encouragement to Polish commerce. King Stanislaus and Kossakowski now both united in recommending despatch; and both for the same reason, because they thought that by speedy acceptance they might possibly obtain the protection of Catharine against Prussia. The treaty was therefore signed on the 22nd of July; the conquest of Russia had received the solemn sanction of the diet.

Buchholz now hoped that his turn was come at last, and lost no time in demanding that a committee should be empowered to treat with him also. In the diet, however, there was but one voice that every means must be used to resist his claim. The same deputies who a few days before

[1] Buchholz, July 2nd. Report of the Crown General Ozazowski, July 26th (extracts from which are given in Polish Journal, 1793, page 813).

had pretended to prefer Siberian exile to the Russian treaty — e. g. Kimbar the member for Upita — loudly declared that Catharine, in her clemency, would not deliver them over to the Germans, after they had placed the fate of their country in her hands. Only a few voices were raised in opposition; others again brought forward the appeal to Austria, and it was actually resolved to send off prayers for help simultaneously to Vienna and St. Petersburg. At Buchholz's instigation, Sievers assembled the party chiefs to various deliberations, at which the latter demanded a favourable treaty of commerce, as the first condition of a political agreement. Sievers then declared to them that Catharine positively insisted on the cession of the land demanded by Prussia; but he told his colleague in private, that he considered the Polish conditions not unreasonable, and pointed out to him that on the arrest of any of the deputies the whole diet would probably disperse. It certainly occurred to Buchholz that during the Russian negotiation no mention had been made of this danger,[1] nor of any further conditions; and with respect to the desired treaty of commerce, he was entirely without any special views or instructions. Just at this time, however, the news of the capture of Mayence arrived, which produced a visible impression on all sides; and as Sievers, on the 29th, sent off a peremptory note to the diet, which was followed by the transmission of full powers on the 31st, Buchholz was once more elated by the joyful prospect of completely attaining his object in three weeks. A particular occurrence contributed to confirm his confidence. Immediately after the 23d of July, General Kossakowski started for his estates, as he alleged, but in reality for St. Petersburg, in order to use his personal influence with Catharine against Prussia.

[1] The town of Grodno was at that time so well guarded that no one could enter the promenade without a pass from the Russian Commandant. Ferrand, III 302.

But he had hardly proceeded half-way on his journey, when he received an imperial order not to enter the capital before the signing of the Prussian treaty. In short, Buchholz felt so certain of the hearty support of Catharine, that he thought himself bound expressly to warn his government against all suggestions at all unfavourable to Russia; — "for," he added to Möllendorf, "every thing is possible among us, even distrust of Russia"!

In fact, both in Berlin and at head-quarters, the Prussian authorities were becoming somewhat impatient; and in the beginning of August, Buchholz received orders to threaten a hostile advance on the part of General Möllendorf, if the matter was not concluded by the 20th. The ambassador soon had an opportunity of making use of these instructions. For in the discussion it appeared that the committee had not been empowered, on the 31st of July, to make a cession of territory, but only to conclude a commercial treaty. Day after day was passed in tedious formalities; so that Buchholz, about the 15th, called upon Sievers to communicate the above-mentioned threat. But, contrary to his expectation, Sievers, under various pretences, declined to do so, and Buchholz observed a rapid diminution in the zeal of the ambassador. He did not know at first to what cause he should ascribe this indifference — whether to advanced age, or want of firmness against the Poles, or the petty desire of not allowing the Prussian treaty to be concluded more quickly than the previous Russian one. By degrees, however, he plainly observed a certain coolness towards Prussia, of which the Poles immediately made use to manifest their own hatred without reserve; and, on the 19th, they even threatened every deputy who should propose the cession with the penalty of high treason. At the same time they sent off to St. Petersburg a formal proposal for a strict alliance, which would of course secure the complete subjection of Poland to Russia. Whereupon Buchholz himself begged General Möllendorf not to pass the cordon, since, he said, the people

in Lithuania would not care the least about the fate of Great Poland or Cracow, but act exclusively according to the directions of Russia; "instead therefore," he added, "of employing military force, I must see what I can do with Sievers by incessant importunity." But the latter was, at this time, holding deliberations with his sovereign of a very different kind. Thugut had once more thrown out a hint to Rasumowski concerning the partition of all Poland; and Sievers was of opinion that in the face of such a tendency Russia ought not to divide the country at all, but to promote the complete restoration and union of Poland — of course under Russian suzerainty. The question arose, consequently, whether he ought not, under plausible pretexts, to defer the signing of the Prussian treaty. He begged the empress to inform him whether she entertained more extended views in regard to Poland, such as he thought that in the interests of Russia she ought to hold. He repeated this request on the 19th, with the remark, that the acceleration or protraction of the Prussian treaty would depend entirely on Catharine's commands. At last, on the 25th of August, he proceeded a step further, by laying the draft of a treaty before the Prussian ambassador, declaring that he could force the diet to accept this, but nothing more. In this document the cession was on the whole maintained; but in the much discussed question of the border line, the claim of Prussia was only half satisfied — viz. in the district of Czenstochau, but not further to the north in regard to Zakroczyns. Buchholz was hereby placed in a position at variance with his last instructions; but in his helpless condition, he signed the draft, and urgently recommended his court to accept it, in order to emerge at last from these endless complications. Hereupon, Sievers appeared for a time to return to his old courses. With the same severity as he had made use of, four weeks before, in his own negotiation, he ordered the diet to come to an immediate settlement; and when, on the 29th, a violent

storm arose in the assembly, when an assenting deputy had been seized as a traitor, and others of the Prussian party threatened with the sword in the hall itself—he gave notice that he would occupy the palace with two battalions of grenadiers, and allow no one to leave the hall until the treaty was signed. Nevertheless the fears of Buchholz were by no means dispelled. He was grieved on the one hand to observe that Sievers continued to advocate the commercial treaty, and encouraged the Poles to remain firm on this point; on the other hand, he suddenly found the influence of Austria rife among the deputies, which had remained entirely in the back-ground during the Russian negociation. It was not, therefore, without anxious suspense that he looked forward to the decisive day, the 2nd of September.

He soon found that he had not been deceived by his forebodings. Sievers had left no doubt that the diet voted under the pressure of Russia. Grenadiers were posted at all the doors of the hall; their commander, General Rautenfeld, sat among the deputies near the throne of the king; whoever wished to leave the hall was thrust back with the butt-end of the musket. For several hours the tumult was dreadful. On the motion of the king and Bishop Kossakowski, the discussion on the draft was begun; and finally a proposition of General Miacynski was carried by sixty-one against twenty-five votes — a proposition which no one knew and no one had read, and which Miacynski only recommended by saying that it was the draft proposed by Sievers. But the matter was by no means at an end. The diet added a protest, expressed in the most violent terms, against the pressure which had been exercised upon them. Buchholz would probably have paid as little regard to this as Sievers had done; but what was of more importance, the diet added four additional articles, according to which, Prussia was to deliver up the image of the Virgin at Czenstochau to the Poles; was not to compel the primate of Gnesen to reside on Prussian territory; was to give up all

hereditary claims to the Radziwill estates; and lastly, the ratification of the whole treaty was not to be made until the treaty of commerce demanded by Poland had been concluded.

The first three points were by no means agreeable to Prussia, but she might have taken them into the bargain, when acquiring a large and well-situated province. But the fourth deferred the settlement of the whole matter to an indefinite future, and one which could be all the less certainly reckoned upon, because the diet claimed the special guarantee of Russia for both the treaty of commerce and the treaty of cession. By these clauses, therefore, the termination of the affair was rendered doubtful, and the whole paraphernalia of Russian violence and Polish indignation, during the sitting, was shewn to be a mere farce. Buchholz hastened in sorrow and anger to Sievers to make emphatic complaints: but the latter coolly replied, that he was quite certain that the Poles would not withdraw the four additional clauses without new measures of compulsion, but that he could not employ any further violence on the part of Russia. Thereupon Buchholz asked him at any rate to give his assent to the entrance of the Prussian troops; but Sievers declared that it was very unfair to make war upon men who were willing to subscribe; he could not take it ill of them, he added, that they had made some conditions, especially in respect to trade, since they, too, wished to live. In conclusion he put an end to all further discussion by these decisive words: "I have received fresh orders to bring the treaty of cession with Prussia to an end; but at the same time to procure for the Poles free-trade and other alleviations, because, without these, they would become too dependent upon Prussia." This declaration put an end to all uncertainty. Before Sievers had sent his troops against the diet, before the latter had made its protests and additional clauses, the article respecting the treaty of commerce—exactly in the same way as the separation of the

two treaties—had been sent from Petersburg. The whole proceedings in the diet, therefore, if not actually directed by Russia, had at any rate secured her approval; and the Prussian treaty was deferred indefinitely, by the command of Catharine, "that the Poles might not become too dependent upon Prussia." On the 3rd and 18th of September the empress repeatedly expressed to her ambassador her entire approbation of all the steps which he had taken against Prussia in favour of Poland. Buchholz, who had no other means of reducing the diet to submission than the aid of Russia, could not any longer struggle against Russia herself; he was obliged to wait and see how his government would meet the unexpected danger. Sievers and the diet appeared to have no doubt of the submission of Prussia, and regarded the treaty with the additional clauses as already concluded. They proceeded to other business, discussed Polish finances and military affairs, dissolved the Targowician confederation in order to place the king, as usual, at the head of the administration, and began to deliberate on a new constitution. In all these matters Sievers displayed industry, penetration, preeminent knowledge, and lofty sentiments, and conducted himself in all respects as the virtual regent of the land. King Stanislaus renewed his proposal to Catharine to appoint the Grand-duke Constantine as his successor; in which, however, no further mention was made of any eventual interests of the German powers.

The report of this turn of affairs, — in itself sufficiently exciting and perilous — reached the Prussian head-quarters at a moment when the Polish question had given rise to deep anxiety and vexation from another quarter; and led immediately to the downfall of the great European coalition, to the real decision of the revolutionary war, and to a crisis of vast importance to the history of the world. It will be necessary to realise to ourselves the general character of Prussian policy since the capture of Mayence.

CHAPTER VI.

CATASTROPHE OF THE COALITION.

Coburg's arguments against a march upon Paris.—Agreement between him and Prussia respecting the plan of the campaign.—Conflicting views in London and Vienna,—Mission of count Lehrbach to the Prussian head-quarters.—He demands a Polish province for Austria.—Arrival of intelligence from Grodno.—Prussia retires from the coalition.—Discontent of Holland and Sardinia.—Conclusion of the Prussian treaty in Grodno. Poland becomes a Russian province by the alliance of the 16th of October.

The fall of Mayence and Valenciennes afforded the allies the opportunity of commencing a decisive attack on the French armies and Paris under the most favourable circumstances. The king of Prussia, who had just formally concluded a treaty with England against the Revolution, on the 18th of July, wished for nothing better: he desired to put an end to the fatal war by rapid blows, and to display the sharpness of the Prussian sword to the enemy and the world, after the disasters of the previous autumn. In his impatience he often gave great trouble to his political advisers, who exhorted him to pause and delay on account of Thugut's untrustworthiness; or pointed out to him the impossibility of defraying the cost of a third campaign in the present state of the Prussian [1] finances. But other views prevailed at the head-quarters of the Duke of Coburg, where no voice was raised in favour of an invasion of France, or a march upon Paris. The ground of this disinclination has not always been rightly stated. A great deal has been

[1] The ministers expressed this opinion in the negotiation of the English treaty, against the conclusion of which they urgently protested.

said of the old methodical tactics, which forbade a further advance until all the border fortresses had been captured. It has even been hinted that Austria retarded the decision, to promote eternal anarchy in France, instead of the restoration of the Bourbons. There is thus much truth in both these views – that Coburg did not easily resolve on bold or fool-hardy steps, and that Thugut had not the slightest liking for the French *Emigrés*. But the Austrian government would have been equally glad with the Prussian to see the end of this expensive war; and it was well known to the older tacticians that border fortresses may, under certain circumstances, be just as well reduced by defeating the hostile army and capturing the capital; as, *vice versa*, the subjection of an enemy's country may be prepared by the conquest of its fortresses. The prince of Coburg was only partly decided by military considerations; in the main he was guided by his political views of the internal condition of France. In the preceding September, the Duke of Brunswick had about the same number of troops as the allied army in Flanders at the time of which we speak; yet his invasion had only led to a union of the contending parties against the attack of foreign enemies—a union for which the German armies remained a match only for a few weeks. Coburg did not wish to repeat this error. He hoped that the revolutionary ferment—if the war could but be kept from immediately affecting the great mass of the people in the interior of the country—would find a vent in the formation of new parties, in wilder and wilder struggles of faction; that the lacerated land would thus be shortly reduced to complete helplessness; and that the moment for a perfectly safe invasion might arrive, perhaps in the spring of 1794.[1] With this view he had already sanctioned a plan of Colonel Mack in April, according to which he was to undertake nothing further during this summer—even after

[1] Memoir of Mallet du Pan, for Lord Elgin and Count Mercy, Mem. I, 408.

the fall of Valenciennes—than the storming of other frontier fortresses. [1]

That this course was strictly in accordance with some of the phases of the general condition of affairs—that it was fully justified, up to August 1793, by the disorders of the Jacobins, the demoralization of the armies, the growing discontent of the border provinces—is not to be denied. But we must immediately add, that even this plan was not fully carried out; that much was neglected that might have been done; and that a most essential point was entirely overlooked. Even with a view to a war of fortresses alone, it was important, nay essential, not to allow the French armies to be restored, and not to open a single breach until the neighbouring camps of the enemy had been broken up. And, above all, it was absolutely indispensable—if they looked for aid from the internal disturbances of France—to support the opponents of the Convention, and not to allow Lyons and La Vendée to bleed to death unaided. Otherwise, it was evident to all men of enlarged views that anarchy would not be infinitely prolonged, but would produce a rigid despotism; all the more quickly, the more violently it broke out. We have seen in Dumouriez' catastrophe that Coburg was aware of this truth; and Prussia, for a time, likewise advocated a landing in La Vendée. But the courts of Vienna and London, unwilling to connect themselves with any French party; rejected every idea of this kind with perfect indifference; nor did they understand that in this case nothing but an immediate advance upon Paris and the Convention could save them. And thus they gave the enemy time and opportunity to develope an overpowering force in the midst of the most fearful dangers.

Meanwhile, about the middle of July, the prince of Coburg laid a general plan of the war before the king of Prussia; by which he hoped, after taking the two border fortresses,

[1] *Oestr. milit. Zeitschrift*, 1813, Band I.

to bring the campaign of the present year to as prosperous a result as possible. His opinion was, that the king should turn from Mayence towards the west, capture Saar-Louis, and endeavour to occupy Lorraine from that side; that meanwhile he himself should operate from Valenciennes towards the south-east, and take Maubeuge, Givèt and Philippeville, by assault. By these means he considered that the two armies would be brought nearer to one another, and strengthened by the now separated corps of communication in Namur, Luxemburg and Trèves; that Flanders would be easily covered in the extreme west; and Alsace and the French army of the Rhine threatened in the rear from the side of Lorraine in the extreme east; and that thus an excellent base would be secured at the conclusion of the campaign for energetic attacks on the interior of France in the following year.

This plan—if once the idea of a rapid advance upon Paris was given up—was obviously well adapted to the purpose in view; the forces of the allies would thus be drawn nearer to one another, would be themselves more protected, and be made more dangerous to the enemy on every theatre of war. The plan, moreover, suited the king of Prussia for political reasons, because it made the attack upon Alsace, contemplated by Wurmser, impossible; an attack of which the Prussian government would not hear before the settlement of the question of the Bavarian exchange. He therefore answered Coburg in the most favourable manner, and immediately after the surrender of Mayence prepared to make the first disposition of his troops against the valley of the Saare. The Duke of Brunswick, indeed, had some doubts, as once before in the Argonnes, whether his field-baking apparatus would be able to keep pace with the army. But here, in the friendly and fruitful Palatinate, it was not possible to speak in real earnest of the starvation of the troops; and in their front, the condition of the French allured them more and more, every day, to a bold advance; for since the

end of July an ever increasing number of the old troops had been withdrawn from these armies for the protection of Flanders, and had only been replaced by recruits, or miserably armed peasants. The mere prevention of the sending off these detachments from the French army would in itself have been a result of the greatest importance to Coburg and Belgium.

But no sooner had the Prussian regiments entered the valleys of the Hardt Mountains, in accordance with this plan, than count Wartensleben, the Austrian plenipotentiary at head-quarters, announced to the king that he expected within a few days the arrival of the imperial general, Prince von Waldeck, with a new plan of the war drawn up in Vienna; and, immediately afterwards, the arrival of Count Lehrbach, the Austrian ambassador at Munich, with important political communications. He therefore begged that all important operations might be deferred until they made their appearance. Waldeck, who presented himself at head-quarters on the 16th of August, brought despatches from his court, which, however, contained views the very opposite to those of Coburg. Wurmser, whose force had meanwhile been raised to 32,000 men, was to employ all his troops in operating, not to the west against the Saare, but against Alsace to the south. For the attainment of this object it was necessary to blockade the fortress of Landau, to beat the French army of the Rhine, and to storm the lines of Weissenburg. When this had been done, hopes were entertained, in consequence of a secret understanding with a party in Strasburg, of a German revolt in Alsace itself, which would immediately deliver up the land into the hands of the emperor. But to do this Wurmser needed, of course, the aid of the Prussian army; and Waldeck therefore begged the king to lead back his troops from the mountains into the valley of the Rhine, and to shut in Landau on the west, while Wurmser stationed himself between the fortress and the river.

By this proposal the scheme against Saar-Louis and Lorraine was at once put aside; for the king could no more venture to advance into Lorraine without the Austrians, than Wurmser could take Alsace without the Prussians. The chief reason, moreover, of such a movement—the approximation of the two great armies to one another—was removed also on the Flemish side; because the Duke of York, in a grand council of war, held on the 4th of August, had declared that he could not join in any operation towards the interior of the country, but must, according to the distinct orders of his government, proceed in an exactly opposite direction, to form the siege of Dunkirk, in doing which he demanded the cooperation of Coburg. It was in vain that the latter pointed out the danger of such a dispersion of their forces: the capture of Dunkirk had been already spoken of in England in April and May, and a decree to this effect had been definitively issued in July, more especially at the instigation of Lord Auckland.[1] The Duke of York considered the wish of his government to gain this long-prized harbour, as a compensation for the expenses of the war, just as legitimate and well-grounded, as the occupation of Valenciennes or Alsace by the Austrians; Coburg therefore was obliged to submit, though with a sorrowful heart. But he proceeded to the execution of the plan with all the more reluctance and languor. The French army in the camp of Cæsar was at that time so demoralized and reduced, that its commander, General Kilmaine, on the approach of the hostile columns, made no attempt at resistance; but, evading the blow, marched westward, and endeavoured to take up a new and stronger position behind the rocky banks of the Scarpe, where he stationed himself, no longer as a protecting force on the road to Paris, but on one side, near the road, and in close connexion with the French corps at Lille.

[1] Vid. A circumstantial notice of this matter by Crawfurd and Jerry in the "Correspondence" of Lord Auckland. III, 86.

Enticing, therefore, as the open road to Paris might appear at first sight, it would have been madness to hasten along it while Kilmaine's forces were uninjured. There was, indeed, no thought of such an invasion at the head-quarters of Coburg; but even for his purposes, and for the thorough support of a war of fortresses, the time for a battle on a large scale was evidently come. This is all the more evident, because he himself was ordered, during the English attempt upon Dunkirk, to assault Lequesnoi, which was about 79 English miles from the former place; and thus, in the face of the gathering enemy, it would be necessary to separate the army into two nearly equally strong—or equally weak—bodies. But whether from contempt for the indisciplined mob of French soldiers, or from narrowness of mind, or from apathetic resignation to the idea that in no case could any good result be obtained—Coburg left Kilmaine undisturbed behind the Scarpe, sent York with 35,000 men against Dunkirk, and himself prepared to proceed against Lequesnoi. And all this was done at the very same time that the attacks of the Germans on the Rhine were exclusively directed to Alsace, just as if they wished to suggest to the French that they should employ the army of the Moselle to reinforce Kilmaine. It must be confessed that such a mass of of political and military blunders has seldom been heaped up in any portion of the history of the world.

On the Rhine, therefore, according to Waldeck's proposal, Landau was to be blockaded on the one side by Wurmser, and on the other by the Prussians. The whole object of the new scheme was looked on with aversion at the Prussian head-quarters, especially since the announced mission of Lehrbach seemed to point very decidedly to new negotiations respecting Bavaria; yet they were not prepared to give a direct refusal, and for the present only proposed a change of tactics. There was reason to fear that if the main body of the Prussians entirely evacuated the mountains, and marched into the valley of the Rhine against Landau, the

French army of the Moselle would push forward in their rear by way of Kaiserslautern and threaten Mayence afresh. For this reason Brunswick proposed to occupy the army of the Moselle by a detached corps, to take up a strong position on the hills near Pirmasenz with his main body, where he would stand exactly between the two French armies, on the crest of the Vosges mountains. In this position he would have the three camps of the Moselle army beneath him on the right, and the widely extended position of the Rhine army on the left; so that he could roll up the former on the one side, on his right wing, or turn the other on the left wing of the lines of Weissenburg, by passing through the valley of the Lauter. This position was actually taken up with perfect success on the 13th and following days. Two camps of the Moselle army—consisting partly of peasants of the general levy, who had their wives and children with them in the trenches—were almost completely dispersed by the first demonstrations of the Prussian detachment, and Brunswick himself took the heights of the Keltrich, near Pirmasenz, by storm on the 17th of August, gave the French a bloody defeat when they attempted to recover them, and fixed himself firmly on the broad ridge of the wooded hill. Unfortunately Wurmser supplied a welcome pretext at the same time for breaking off all further offensive operations. According to the plan proposed, he ought to have remained stationary, either in the neigbourhood of Landau, or at any rate close to the hills; but instead of this, he suddenly started off—in accordance with the first proposal of Waldeck—towards the South and the Rhine, marched past Landau, and, after many bloody skirmishes, drove a French corps out of the Bienwald to the foot of the Weissenburg lines. As the left flank of the Prussian position was hereby exposed, the king, very ungraciously, called upon him to return, and got so angry during the correspondence, that he at last sent a formal charge against Wurmser to Vienna. At this moment, however, the eagerly expected

Lehrbach appeared at head-quarters, and the military differences were immediately thrown into the shade by a serious political discord.

We have already seen that Thugut, immediately after his entrance into the Ministry, made the restoration of the old intimate relations with Russia, the corner-stone of his whole political sytem. He repeatedly offered to Catherine the complete renewal of the policy of Joseph II., if she would but prevent the aggrandisement of Prussia, and at any rate guarantee to Austria, in addition to a smaller or greater part of Poland, some considerable territorial acquisition. On being asked what territory he wished for, he hesitated to reply; he preferred trying to induce Russia to make some offer, and to await the issue of affairs in Grodno. All parties, indeed, made it very difficult to him to adhere to this threatening silence. The Russian Ministers told the Imperial Ambassador, Count Cobenzl, that they would gladly to all in their power to moderate Prussia's lust of Polish territory; but they demanded in return that Austria should accede to the treaty of January 23d, and finally settle the whole affair, by a definite declaration of her further pretensions; on the other side, the English government pressed for the establishment of some definite object of their common warlike operations. England became more and more decided in her opposition to the Bavarian-Belgian Exchange, but offered the Emperor, in its stead, her ready assent to any extension of his frontiers whatever at the cost of France, whether on the side of Flanders, or that of Alsace. In Vienna the two Colloredos, more especially, advocated the adoption of this course, by which the powerful support of England would be secured; and Thugut thereupon allowed himself to be induced in the middle of June to make a declaration to Lord Grenville, on the part of the ministry, expressly giving up the Bavarian-Belgian Exchange. It is true, indeed, that he silently resolved, even if he were obliged to keep Belgium, to continue his efforts for the acquisition

of Bavaria, substituting Alsace for Belgium as a compensation to the Bavarian Elector. He therefore urgently demanded of the English Government the profoundest secresy in regard to the new combination against Prussia, under the pretext that the king, out of jealousy towards Austria, would not consent to weaken France, unless the Bavarian Exchange were still put forward as a bugbear. Prussia indeed had in the meanwhile declared, on the 10th of June, its consent to the Emperor's acquiring either Bavaria or Alsace, on condition, however, that Austria should then acknowledge the treaty of St. Petersburg; and as Thugut was once for all determined not to do this, he avoided for the present making any definite communication to Prussia on this head. Meanwhile the operations of war became more and more urgent; the king more and more impatiently demanded some definite decision respecting the plan of the campaign, and the question of compensation; and Thugut at last resolved to send Count Lehrbach, the Austrian Ambassador in Munich, to the Prussian head-quarters, not, indeed, to come to an understanding, but to amuse the king, as he reported to St. Petersburg, by empty negotiations, until Russia and Austria were fully agreed upon some common course of action.

Lehrbach was in the first place to quiet the fears of Charles Theodore the Bavarian Elector, respecting the intentions of Austria. The aged Prince had always been ready to resign Bavaria, which he heartily disliked, to the Emperor, in exchange for other possessions; but he was harassed on one side by the opposition of his cousins of Deux Ponts, and on the other by a powerful party at the court of Munich, and lastly by the representations of English diplomatists. Thugut, therefore, sent him word through Lehrbach that for the present there would be no further mention of the Bavarian Exchange, and that the Emperor would, under no circumstances, take any step without the knowledge of Charles Theodore. The

elector was greatly relieved by this communication, and immediately after Lehrbach's departure he summoned the Bavarian diet, and gave them the solemn declaration that he had never had any intention of exchanging Bavaria for any land in the world. The Estates received his words with enthusiastic applause, and granted, in addition to the federal contingent against France, 17,000 florins, to defend the country against any violent encroachment.

It was under these circumstances that Lehrbach, on the 25th of August, appeared at the Prussian head-quarters; a tall, lank restless man, with piercing eyes, well known as a crafty negotiator, a thorough connoisseur of the affairs of the empire, and a violent opponent of Prussia. In accordance with his instructions he spoke first of Bavaria, adding, that if this country was not to be obtained, the emperor ought to demand the aid of Prussia in the conquest of Alsace or Lorraine. Lucchesini, who had the task of negotiating with him, enquired whether England would not, in that case, offer a decided opposition to the Bavarian exchange. He had received from the English envoy, Lord Yarmouth, a general, and, as we know, well-founded, intimation to this effect. Lehrbach, however, replied in the most positive terms that there was not the slightest ground for this apprehension; and that the emperor, on his part, would never relinquish the plan of exchange. Whereupon Lucchesini promised to report the matter to the king; but in the first place he hastened to Lord Yarmouth, to learn if possible the truth from him. Lord Yarmouth, with the honest intention of throwing down the wall of separation between Berlin and Vienna, was at last induced to confess to Lucchesini, not only that England had opposed the Bavarian exchange, but that Austria had renounced the plan in a formal treaty. We may easily imagine what an effect this discovery of the duplicity of the Austrian cabinet would have upon the Prussian statesman. As late as the 10th of June the king had signified in Vienna his consent to the exchange, on condition

that Austria would ratify the partition of Poland. And now, not only did the emperor persist in his resistance in the matter of Poland, but a claim was raised by Austria to large provinces in France, while she was convicted of sheer but double-dealing and deceit in respect to the Bavarian exchange. The immediate effect was that the king entirely suspended the warlike operations in Alsace, the possession of which would have enabled Austria to press with double weight upon the South of Germany. It was just at this time—on the 27th—that Brunswick announced that a vigorous attack must be made on the enemy, that the frontier could be crossed in two days march, and that his position was so favourable that he should risk his military reputation by any longer inactivity; yet he received orders, by return of courier, to postpone all aggressive movements, from political considerations. [1] In order, at the same time, to show most unequivocally his continued readiness to oppose the Revolution, the king sent a fresh offer, on the 31st of August, to Coburg, to join him in operating against the Saare and Lorraine, and warmly urged him to bring his former plan of a campaign once more before the government of Vienna. Coburg, of course, replied in a delighted tone, and forwarded a warm recommendation of the scheme to Vienna; whereupon Thugut immediately resolved to dismiss this inconvenient commander-in-chief, and to supply his place, as soon as possible, by a more accommodating tool.

Meanwhile Lehrbach's negotiation, and with it the great Coalition, had met with a disastrous fate. After a pause of ten days Lucchesini reopened the conference, in which Lehrbach, in consequence of the unpleasant frankness of Lord Yarmouth, found himself in a very unenviable position. He could not well make any further use of the Bavarian scheme, but he insisted, all the more decidedly, on the consent of Prussia to Austria's claim to the French provinces. The

[1] Wagner, *Feldzug von* 1793, p. 82.

answer, of course, was, that Austria must first of all accede to the treaty of St. Petersburg, and guarantee the Prussian acquisitions in Poland. But this Lehrbach positively refused to do. The Russian cabinet, he said, no longer attached any importance to the adhesion of the emperor, but, on the contrary, was ready, on the first opportunity, to award a share of Poland to its old ally.[1] After all the hindrances which had arisen in Grodno, during the whole course of the summer, to the aggrandizement of Prussia, nothing could be more displeasing to the king than this fresh announcement of Austria's claims to Polish territory. For the present, however, he restrained himself, and avoided, making any sharp reply, because he hoped, in a very short time, to be able to lay the Polish treaty of cession before count Lehrbach, as a *fait accompli*. The Prussian government had received the sketch of Sievers' plan of the 25th of August just at the right moment; they overlooked, in consequence of the new complications with Austria, the unfavourable settlement of the frontiers, and hastened to signify the assent of the king. "The friendship of the Russian empress," wrote the king to general Möllendorf, "is too important to us at the present conjuncture, to allow of our entering into tedious discussions for the sake of a small gain." Feeling sure of bringing the matter to a conclusion, he sent off suitable diamond snuff-boxes for the Chancellor and the Crown-general on the Polish side, and the order of the black eagle for Sievers and Igelström at Grodno, and counted the hours till the arrival of the courier, who was to bring back the treaty sealed and signed.

[1] The king immediately caused a full report of Lehrbach's negotiation to be sent to several of his embassies—to Cæsar, the *chargé d'affaires* in Vienna, on the 27th of August; to count Tauenzien, in Belgium, on the 2d of September; and to Count Golz, in St. Petersburg, on the 25th of October. In addition to this, Cæsar's reports arrived from Vienna, and Sir Morton Eden's letters, of the 20th, to Lord Auckland, and of the 31st of August to Lord Grenville.

Instead of this, however, came the above-mentioned despatches of the minister Buchholz, reporting that nothing was completed, not the slightest security attained; that the Austrians were actively intriguing, and the support of Russia at an end. The effect was deep and painful. The king was at once determined not to allow himself to be thus put upon. He remembered that at Merle he had only promised his help in the French war for the one campaign of 1793, and that, too, only on condition of a territorial compensation in Poland; he considered himself free from every obligation to employ a single man against France beyond his federal contingent, for another hour. Hitherto he had carried on the contest against the Revolution with pleasure, but he was now threatened in his interests and honour alike, and resolved at once to bring the Polish matter to a decision, by the employment, if necessary, of all his forces. With this view he determined that a portion of the Rhine army should return to the Anspach territory; that new regiments in Silesia and Prussia should be called into active service, in order that Möllendorf's force might be raised to 40,000 men. And in order to remove all doubts of the seriousness of his intentions, the king proposed to leave the Rhine army and repair in person to Posen. He had the less scruple in taking this last and most extraordinary step, because Brunswick, on the 16th of September, had successfully repulsed an attack of the French on his position at Pirmasenz, and General Ferraris arrived from Vienna with the repeated declaration of the emperor, that he had no other wish, on this theatre of the war, than the conquest of Alsace. There was, therefore, no pressing danger for Prussia on the side of the enemy, and nothing to allure her to military action of her own, by which the king could have been deterred from his journey.

These resolutions arose so directly and necessarily from the situation of affairs, that at the very moment they were adopted in Edighofen, they were foreseen, and taken for

granted, both by the ministers in Berlin, and by the Prussian ambassador at St. Petersburg.

At the first intelligence of the proceedings in Grodno, Count Golz declared to the Vice-chancellor Ostermann, that the Prussian troops would march away; whereupon Ostermann manifested a lively indignation, expressed his full approval of the demands of the Polish diet, and even blamed Sievers for having hitherto gone beyond his instruction in favour of Prussia.[1] The Prussian ministry, however, instructed Buchholz to sign the main treaty, and to reject the four additional clauses unconditionally, with the threat of military force. Almost on the very same day, Lucchesini, at headquarters, made the decisive declaration to count Lehrbach, that in the preceding year, the aid of Prussia in the campaign of 1793 had been promised on condition of receiving Austria's support in Poland; that, seeing the evident disinclination of the emperor to fulfil this condition, Prussia would no longer insist upon his aid: and that the king was now prevented by his obligations to his own State from contributing any further, from his own resources, to the continuance of the war against France.[2]

And thus from Thugut's folly and dishonesty, from Austria's shortsighted eagerness for gain, from Russia's inconsiderate enmity to German interests—from all these causes which had long been at work with terrible effect,—the calamity suddenly arose, and the rupture of the European coalition, in the most important quarter, was openly declared. The long rivalry of Prussia and Austria had been mitigated in the preceding year by the circumspection of Leopold, and the devotion of the king; but now the paths of Prussia and Austria diverged for nearly an age—an age which was to be filled, in consequence of this separation, with infinite suf-

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[1] Hogguer, September 13th.

[2] Haeften communicates an extract from this answer to the States-General of Holland on the 16th October.

ferings, unexampled humiliation, and wide-spread convulsions. Throwing off all sense of kindred, they separated from one another with the bitterest feelings, although the poisonous fruits of their actions came to light at the very moment of the breach. To whatever part of the great theatre of war we look, in this September month, we see the forces of ancient Europe crumbling away by internal decomposition. At the very beginning of the Lyonese revolt, Piedmont had asked for an Austrian reinforcement of 12,000 men, and the imperial general, de Vins, had urgently supported the demand, the granting of which, in the then position of affairs, might have had important results. But de Vins belonged to the school of Laudon, and on this account Lascy, as president of the Aulic council of war, refused all assistance. Thugut, again, hated Piedmont as much as Prussia, and rejected the demand, except on the condition that Sardinia, in case of her enlarging her borders on the side of France, should cede the Novarese territory to Austria.[1] The consequence was that the attack upon Savoy, which had been successfully commenced in the middle of September, came to a complete stand-still, and the important prospect of relieving Lyons had been no sooner opened than it was closed again. It is easy to conceive that all the zeal of Sardinia for such a calamitous and hopeless war was now thoroughly extinguished, and it was succeeded by an apathetic disgust, which a few years later brought on the most fatal consequences both to the house of Savoy and to Austria. Such was the position of affairs in the southern portion of the great theatre of war. The relation between Holland and her more powerful allies afforded an exact counterpart to it, in the north. When the latter emulously stretched out their hands for fresh booty, the States-General of Holland considered that they too must not neglect the interests of their country,

[1] Haeften 20th and 21st of July. Sir Morton Eden to Lord Auckland, 10th of August.

and appealed, in the first place, to England to learn what could be done for the extension of their territory. It was not exactly easy to find a suitable expedient; since, as we have seen, Austria would not give up to the Dutch even a district in the province of Liege, and still less a part of her own dominions; and although England continued to support the wishes of Holland, the result was so nugatory, that, in the first ebullition of feeling, the States-General thought of nothing less than withdrawing from the alliance; and the Prince of Orange immediately received orders to withdraw his troops from the English, and to take up a separate position near Menin.[1] In a word, the grand Coalition was every where forced from its hinges; Prussia had formally renounced it; Holland and Sardinia were on the point of following her example; and the offensive war against the Revolution, which was, from the very beginning, carried on with too much deliberation, and on faulty principles, died away on all points, almost without any merit on the part of the enemy. The Parisian democracy, unchecked and undisturbed, had full leisure to collect its powers after the pangs of anarchy, and then to proceed, in its turn, to attack dismembered and divided Europe.

Thugut's policy, which had operated so ruinously on the one side, proved itself impotent even in Poland, for the sake of which he had caused such wide-spread disorder. Catharine, it is true, wished to render Prussia as weak and insecure as possible in that country; and had therefore, as we have seen, not only approved of, but suggested, the course pursued by Sievers and Kossakowski. But in the then state of affairs she could not afford to come to a serious breach with Prussia. On this point Austria's renewed demand of a Polish province left no doubt; for however disagreeable the

[1] Tauenzien to the king of Prussia from Coburg's head-quarters, 2nd of September. Answer of the Prussian ministers, 9th of September. Lord Auckland to the grand-pensionary, 24th of January 1794.

Prussian acquisition might be to her, she had, of course, not the slightest inclination to make a further protest, if the consequence of it was to be the cession of other parts of Poland to Austria. The empress had succeeded in obtaining a dominant position in Poland, and she now resolved to bring the matter to a conclusion, according to the treaty of St. Petersburg.

Sievers therefore was instructed to remove the additional articles which had given offence to Prussia. Whereupon Buchholz had the pleasure of hearing Sievers express his deep indignation against the Poles, who had deceived him by false statements, but who could not for a moment longer expect any indulgence at his hands. The whole aspect of affairs was entirely changed at once; Buchholz again met with nothing but complaisance on the part of the "good ambassador," and received unusual respect from the Poles. They immediately proceeded to put the last finish to the treaty, and the leaders of the diet went to the ambassador to consult with him on the conditions, and the external form, of the final act. They all requested that Sievers would lend military aid, as on the 22nd of July and the 29th of August, since they could not possibly yield without apparent compulsion and protest. A large number of individual deputies made it a condition that they should receive considerable sums of money, which Buchholz, in the joy of his heart, agreed without reluctance to pay—but not, however, until the treaty had been concluded. After this agreement, Sievers, on the 22nd of September, began to make a show of violence, by arresting four orators of the opposition by Russian patrols, and sending them back to their homes. Thereupon, on the 23rd, the diet was again surrounded by grenadiers and artillery, and an imperious note was read to the deputies, in which Sievers demanded immediate signature. For the protest, which had been conceded to them beforehand, the diet on this occasion chose a new form, viz. a universal silence, which no exhortation could induce them to break;

until at last, late at night, since the affair must somehow be brought to a conclusion, Ankwitz, the deputy, proposed that the silence should be considered to give consent, and Marshal Bilinski thereupon declared the Prussian treaty to be concluded. And thus the affair with Prussia was settled, and Frederick William, who was approaching his new province in all haste, was able to place his army in this quarter on a peace footing, and receive loyal addresses, garlands and illuminations, in Thorn and Posen. Russia had for the moment renounced this portion of the Polish booty. But she proceeded all the more rapidly to secure to herself the entire possession of the other provinces of the republic. It is true that Catharine once more declined the proposal of King Stanislaus, that the Grand-duke Constantine should be designated as his successor: her grandson seemed to her too good for the part which the king of Poland was destined to play. What this part was, was brought to light, immediately after the conclusion of the Prussian treaty, in a motion of the deputy Ankwitz, to secure the safety of Poland by a perpetual alliance with Russia. On the 30th the chancellors of the diet sent a suitable communication on the subject to Sievers, who, on the 5th of October, promised his full consent to the petition, (which had been really drawn up by himself) and immediately afterwards produced the draft of the treaty in eighteen articles. By this treaty the two States promised mutually to aid each other with all their forces in every war, in which the command-in-chief would always fall to that power which furnished the most troops; "Accordingly," continues the document, "as Poland's political existence hereby gains a great interest for Russia, the latter must be empowered at all times to send her troops into Poland and to have them maintained there." In the next place the ambassadors of the two States at foreign courts were to be directed to act together, as much as possible; and, lastly, Poland was never to make any change in her constitution without the consent of Russia. The complete

subjection of Poland to the Russian power could hardly be more openly expressed; the system of a vassal monarchy was virtually and unreservedly exchanged for complete incorporation. "Your majesty's troops," wrote Sievers on the 23rd to the empress, "have by this act become Polish; you dispose of them as you dispose of the quarters and the movements of the troops of Poland and Lithuania. With regard to the present king we must hold the rod over him; the future king will be chosen by Your Majesty, and he must also have his task assigned him, and receive a *major domus*, under the title of a Russian ambassador, invested with infinitely more power than ever the viceroy of Ireland or Sicily possessed, or your governor-general of Novgorod, or your stadtholder of Twer." Whilst, therefore, Europe was tottering beneath the convulsions of revolution and revolutionary war, Russia was extending her conquests, after the long and secret preparation of overwhelming forces, over the whole territory which lies between the Carpathians and the Baltic; and, for the second time in the same year, she took undisputed possession of more them 66,000 square miles by a single stroke of the pen. It is true that the rulers at Vienna and Berlin felt the dangerous and continually increasing pressure of their colossal military neighbour; but exasperated as they were against one another, and constantly occupied by France, they had no power of interfering. The only effect which this unexampled deed of violence produced upon them, was the increased desire of emerging as soon as possible from the boundless complications of the French war. The acceptance of Sievers' treaty, after a few sham-fights about the wording of the articles, was a matter of course. After its adoption, on the 16th of October, the deputy Jankowski, on the 18th, ventured to remark, that the so-called alliance, was a mere treaty of subjection; but King Stanislaus closed his mouth by the irrefutable rejoinder, that all resistance would only increase the evil. Bilinski, the marshal of the diet, declared in the name of the Polish government,

that the new treaty would undoubtedly tend to the happiness of Poland. Meanwhile Catharine drew together, in Ukraine, the Polish regiments which were at present stationed in the ceded provinces, and caused them to be reinforced by large bodies of Russians:[1] it was said that she was meditating fresh glories for her reign, in the final completion of her Turkish schemes—in the overthrow of the Osman empire in Europe.

[1] Hogguer's despatches during these months are full of this subject.

BOOK VIII.

REIGN OF TERROR IN FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE JACOBINS IN CARRYING ON THE GOVERNMENT.—THE COMMUNE ADVOCATES A LEVY OF THE PEOPLE EN MASSE.—INSTEAD OF THIS A MOTION IS CARRIED FOR A FRESH RECRUITMENT.—BREACH BETWEEN HEBERT AND DANTON.—LAW AGAINST MONOPOLY (ACCAPAREMENT). STATE-BANKRUPTCY. REQUISITIONS.—MONEY TRAFFIC OF THE PARISIAN MUNICIPALITY.—OPPOSITION OF THE BOURGEOIS.—PARTY CONTESTS RESPECTING WAR IN LA VENDÉE,—LOSS OF TOULON.—CONVENTION AND MUNICIPALITY DECREE NEW TERRORISING MEASURES.—LAWS RESPECTING REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, "SUSPECTS", FIXED PRICES, AND REQUISITIONS.—THE MUNICIPALITY RECEIVES A MILLION LIVRES A WEEK.—THE GIRONDISTS BROUGHT BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL.—THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY PROCLAIMED AS A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

BY the end of July France was subjected to the rule of the Jacobins. After having destroyed the power of the Girondists on the 21st of January, and their political existence on the 2nd of June, they beat down the last resistance, offered by their nominal associates in the Committee of Public Safety, on the 10th of July, and established themselves in the possession of the highest authority in the land. The revolt in the provinces had been put down, or had died away of itself, except in three cities—which were daily more and more hardly pressed by superior forces—and in La Vendée, which had no internal connexion with the rest of France, and, consequently, had no hope, and scarcely a wish, to extend the theatre of its contest. As they had, at the same time, no fear of any serious attack from without, the victorious democrats at last saw themselves at the goal which they had been pursuing for four long and eventful years. All that they had prematurely proclaimed with inconsiderate joy in August 1792—all that they had reluctantly been obliged to

yield for a short space to the reaction of September—was now at last attained, and the blood and treasure of all France was at their disposal.

The next object was to preserve the dominion which they had gained as the prize of the contest, and to mature it into an enduring and well-ordered government; a task which had peculiar difficulties for the Jacobins—difficulties which did not arise, for the moment, from the thoroughly bewildered population, but sprang from the nature of the rulers themselves. Their last victories over the revolted provinces had been gained by their troops; but it was only too certain that the army could not possibly, in the long run, be the real foundation of their power. A genuine soldier would not easily despise any thing more thoroughly than the machinations of the clubs: how was it be possible then that he would long lend himself to be their subservient tool? Robespierre, the men of the Commune, and the minister at war, were deeply penetrated by this conviction, and derived from it the apparent audacity with which they disorganized their own armies in the face of the enemy. The army might, indeed, be employed for the moment, to protect their frontiers, or to put down rebellion, but they must look about them for other, more lasting, supports of their authority at home.

These were already everywhere in existence, or at any rate in a forward state of preparation, by means of the influence brought to bear for many years past upon the proletariate. Every town, and almost every village, had its club (in close connexion with the Jacobins of the capital,) in which the democrats among the small artisans, peasants, and day-labourers, collected, together with all the ambitious and plunder-loving rabble of the place. This club managed the elections to civic offices, when the conventional commissioners allowed of any elections at all; it furnished the members of the revolutionary committee, and thereby exercised an almost unlimited police authority over the citizens. Its members,

too, formed the only remnant of an armed national guard, after the disarming of the "suspected" persons. By these means, with the revolutionary tribunal, and the ever-ready guillotine, in the back ground, and lastly, with the army as a reserve in case of need, the subjection of the surrounding country might be effected for some time, and the great mass of the subjugated people might be regarded for the moment as harmless.

On the other hand there was a near and very serious danger in the nature of these organs of government—of these props and associates themselves. Untractable and anarchical, with every passion unchained, and unbounded in their desires, they allowed themselves, indeed, to be employed for the overthrow of their opponents, and the plundering of the conquered. But it was another question how far their leaders could reckon upon their continued union, their assent to a systematic course of proceeding, their obedience to the most necessary orders. The Jacobin mobs had from the very beginning found a common ground in the rejection of all discipline, order and authority; but they had neither the will nor the power to sacrificce the least of their appetites to any man, even though he rose from among themselves. How often must Robespierre, while he was striving to bring order and method into this turmoil of obstinacy and short-sightedness, avarice and love of plunder, by all the arts of varied calculation, have sunk down exhausted by the hopeless task! How must he, in his perpetual suspicions of the ambition of the generals, have secretly envied the future lot of a dictator, to whom an attached army would always eagerly offer its well-prepared and serviceable powers! Whichever way he looked, he only saw one or two who were convinced of the necessity of a strong government; and these had always a still stronger conviction that they themselves ought to be the heads of it. And in fact, what process of reasoning could lay an obligation on the Jacobins of the Faubourg to obey the Jacobins of the Municipality?—or on

the latter to obey the Jacobins of the Convention?—or on both to submit to the Jacobins of the Committee of Public Safety? They all felt as lords and masters of the enslaved and proscribed nation; none of these new sovereigns, therefore, had the slightest inclination to concede to any of his companions a higher grade of power than his own. The history of the Jacobin government, which we are about to consider in the following pages, everywhere presents the picture of an unexampled despotism over the mass of the nation, and a never-ending feud among the possessors of supreme authority.

When, on the 27th of July, Robespierre entered into the Committee of Public Safety, the position of affairs was in no respect legally settled. The Convention itself, having completed the new constitution, was about to lose the powers intrusted to it. On the 18th of August, the commissioners of the sovereign people were summoned to Paris, from all the departments, to declare their acceptance of the constitution, amidst the parade of a great republican festival. When this had been done, the Convention ought properly to have given place to a new assembly, in which case, the Committee of Public Safety, too, would disappear with the body from which it had proceeded. The Committee, moreover, had no independent existence, even though the dissolution of the Convention should be delayed; but might, according to the law, be renewed by the Convention on the 18th of every month, or entirely done away with. But both the Convention and the Committee very well knew what they had to expect from France and the future, if they once surrendered the helm of power: the Convention therefore was resolved not to permit a new election, and the Committee determined to establish itself as a regular government. As we have said, they no longer feared any resistance on the part of the French people: what they had to deal with was the disinclination of the other Jacobins, to whom such a turn of affairs would bring no personal profit. The Con-

vention had to fear the intractability of all non-deputies, especially of the club and the Parisian municipality; the Committee were apprehensive, too, of the ambition of the ministries, more particularly of Bouchotte and his friends; and dreaded above all things the jealousy of the other members of the Convention itself. The latter experienced these difficulties at the very first step which it took, on the first of August, towards the confirmation of its power. Danton, who had been driven from his place, three weeks before, by unfavourable circumstances, who had as little hope of advantage to himself from a new election as Robespierre, and who still regarded a strong government as a prime necessity, condescended to make advances to the newrulers, and sought to better his own position by offering them his support. He was still influential and formidable enough to make them readily accept his overtures; and it was he, therefore, who, on the 1st of August, surprised the Convention with a proposal to appoint the Committee of Public Safety as a provisional government, and for this purpose to make it a grant of 50 million livres. His speech, violent and boisterous, as usual, was indeed applauded with obedient enthusiasm, but the matter itself excited such an evident displeasure in the assembly, that the members of the Committee hastened to disown the motion, and only condescended to accept the grant of money, on the following day. Danton bitterly complained that in spite of his previous understanding with them, they had thrown all the burden of the unpopular motion on to his shoulders, and swore that he would never enter into their Committee. Matters, however, did not come to a full breach between them, since both parties were fully occupied by a common opponent, and were thus kept together in spite of all their personal dislikes. These opponents were the united *coterie* of the municipality and the war ministry, Chaumette and Hebert, Vincent and Rousin, with their associates—the party of the Hebertists, as they were generally called from this period. They had, indeed, up to this time

got on very well with Robespierre, because the latter had rested on their support and had consequently furthered their wishes; they agreed, too, in important points—in their hatred towards the queen and Custine, and in their friendship for Bouchotte and Rossignol. But that which henceforth irrevocably separated them, was the simple but all important circumstance, that Robespierre had become the possessor of the highest power in the State, while the Hebertists remained in a subordinate position. Hebert and Vincent, who wished, above all things, to possess power and its enjoyments for themselves, were not a little angry, therefore, at the motion of the first of August, which would have given unlimited power for an indefinite period to the Committee of Public Safety; and Vincent made a furious speech in the Jacobin club, on the 5th, in which he proved that a violation of the holiest principle had been committed—a crime against the sovereignty of the people. As the motion, however, had been rejected in the Convention itself, the quarrel in the club had for the time no further consequences: but a new arrangement of parties had taken place, and soon afterwards an occasion for a far more important dispute occurred.

The 10th of August, and with it the festival of the new constitution, was near at hand. The commissioners of departments gradually arrived in Paris; the government, by no means certain of their influence in the lately subjugated provinces, had them watched during their journey and still more closely in the capital itself.[1] Most of them, indeed, were nothing but envoys of the Jacobin clubs in the provincial towns,—more violent, and in part still less educated, demagogues than their Parisians colleagues,—who immediately united with the mother-club, and fell entirely into the hands of Hebert and his friends. But besides these,

[1] By the October hero Maillard and twenty-eight special commissioners. The cost of this surveillance amounted to 22,000 francs. Conv. Nat. 2nd January 1794, report of Vouland.

there was a minority of moderate citizens, who had been appointed by real popular election, and who, resting on their temporary dignity, aimed, if not at a restoration of the Girondists, at least at a general amnesty in Paris. The *Comité de Sûreté générale*,[1] however, being informed of this, immediately obtained powers from the Convention to arrest any deputy who should come forward with such obnoxious plans; and the only consequence of this symptom of the existence of a moderate party, was a brief restoration of harmony among the Jacobins, and their decided predilection for the most violent revolutionary tendencies. This profited no one so much as the Hebertists, who immediately used the favourable moment to gain over the majority of the commissioners to their aims.

We may remember an old and cherished idea of this party —which they actually carried out in several Departments, but were obliged to give up in Paris after a single attempt—of enrolling all the wealthier, and otherwise hostile, citizens, in the regiments stationed on the frontier; and at the same time arming the proletaries who sided with themselves, as a democratic force in the interior of the country. When, in consequence of the dangerous turn which the war had taken since the end of July, the cry was raised in every direction that the army must be strengthened, the moment semed to them favourable for realizing this plan in its full extent. As early as the 5th, the Commune made a proposition to the Convention for summoning the whole nation *en masse* to arms, fixing upon those who were to march into the field by a system of drawing lots in the different classes of age, and leaving the details of the execution—i. e. the practical decision—to the communal and district councillors. In the speeches which were held during the solemnities of the 10th—mostly in bombastic and tasteless

[1] The highest police authority; de Salut Public (Committee of Public not to be confounded with the Comité Safety).

style [1]—nothing occurred but a few unimportant commonplaces; but on the following day, at the Jacobin club, motion followed motion in quick succession. First of all, Robespierre obtained universal applause, when he demanded the head of Custine, increased exertions for carrying on the war, and, what was of most importance, the prolongation of the Convention. [2] In the next place a demand was made for a levy *en masse,* first of the aristocrats, and then of the *Sansculottes;* and the club men and commissioners had learned their lesson so well, that in spite of the scruples of Robespierre—who said that the measure smacked more of enthusiasm than cool consideration—it was resolved, amidst great applause, to bring the motion before the Convention on the 12th. The prospect which was now opened to the demagogues was indeed brilliant and unexampled. A summons to arms of all the males in France!—what a confusion would thus be caused throughout the country; what an opportunity would thus be given for using violence against opponents, and for enriching the patriots! They appeared at the appointed hour, in solemn procession, at the bar of the Convention, with one of the commissioners at their head as spokesman. It was high time, he said, to put an end to the intrigues of the enemies of freedom, and save the country by one grand measure. The nation must rise *en masse,* seize all suspected persons, keep their families as hostages, send the enemies of freedom to the frontier, and force them to fight against the foreign foe, with the terrible troops of the *Sansculottes* behind them.

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[1] Conv. Nat. 7. Vendem. III. Chenier: "*La seule fête du 10 août 1793 a couté à la nation 1,200,000 francs, de tout cela il n'est resté que du plâtre et des chiffons.*" [2] He spoke in opposition to Danton's friend Lacroix, who, in the morning, had obtained a decree from the Convention, that, with a view to the new elections, the necessary numbering of the people should be arranged. The position of the Dantonists, however, leaves no doubt that this was not seriously meant; at any rate months must pass before the census could be completed.

The Convention shouted applause, as was always the case when a genuine friend of the people delivered a thundering oration. But no one would listen to the proposal itself, and least of all the members of the government, who had the best reason to know the dangers which would arise from the execution of so crazy a proposition.[1] Danton undertook to avert the worst, by apparently yielding to the noisy crowd. "Certainly," he cried, "the nation must rise *en masse*, but it must be done in an orderly manner. Who can be better adapted for the purpose than the 8,000 commissioners of the French people themselves? they will swear to you, that each of them, in his own home, will urge his fellow-citizens to the utmost; that at their summons the people will either die, or complete the annihilation of all tyrants. Arrest all suspected persons, but do not send them to the armies, where they would only do mischief, but keep them as hostages, instead of their families; and give full powers to the commissioners to levy 400,000 men in the Departments against the barbarians of the north." Hereupon there were fresh shouts of applause, and promises to march to death or freedom. Robespierre and Couthon added remarks on the conspirators, the faithless officials, the supplies of arms and provisions; and every one seemed at last contented, when the proposed powers for the commissioners, and the arrest of all suspected persons, were decreed; and the Committee of Public Safety was entrusted with the most important function, that of bringing up a report concerning the execution of these weighty matters.

On the 14th Danton anticipated this report, by proposing to formulise the powers of the commissioners more precisely, and to limit them to the levy of the first class—the citizens

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[1] Carnot wrote on the 30th of July to the Committee respecting a plan of recruiting the whole population of the northern frontier; he said that it could either not be carried out at all, or would lead to a defeat like those of Cressy and Agincourt.

from eighteen to twenty-five years: and the Convention, which on the same day appointed two military members—the engineer officers, Carnot and Prieur (*Côte-d'Or*)—as assessors to the Committee of Public Safety, gave validity to the motion on the spot. But this was, indeed, quite a different thing from the plan originally proposed, since it did not drive political opponents from house and home, but only summoned the youth of France to the army, without respect of parties. A new delegation, therefore, from the commissioners and the Parisian sections, made its appearance on the 16th, bitterly complaining that the Convention had transformed a sublime measure of deliverance into a mere vulgar recruitment. Their indignation was so loudly expressed, that the Committee did not venture directly to reject their prayer. Barère, accordingly, to the lively satisfaction of the commissioners, caused the decree to be proclaimed: "The French people rises *en masse;* the commissioners of the people will collect arms and provisions; the communal councillors will march at the head of the people." Ridiculous as this bombast must have sounded to every reasonable being, Barère brought forward some special decrees of execution on the 20th: then, however, Danton intervened again, to the great relief of the Convention and the Committee. When he pointed out that, in the midst of such a tumult, the people could neither be armed nor provisioned, the matter was once more referred to a committee, who, on the 23rd, had the courage to declare, that the march of the whole population to the frontier was a chimera, which could only serve to excite the ridicule of the aristocrats; and in their new propositions they entirely agreed with Danton's views. And thus arose the celebrated law, which placed all the citizens of France, from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, at the disposal of the government for active service, granted thirty million livres for the manufacture of arms, and, meanwhile, collected the young men in the district towns for the purpose of drilling them. Nothing more was said of driving the "*suspects*" into the field of

battle, or of the levy *en masse*, except in a few border districts, where conventional commissioners of Hebert's party drove the peasants into the camps, without any arms, or, at best, with pikes, and sometimes with their wives and children, to the great horror of the generals.

The grand measure of deliverance, therefore, was thus really changed into an extraordinary and unbounded recruitment. It is evident that it could be of no service to the armies until after the lapse of several months, and consequently had no influence in delivering the nation from the immediate dangers of war; nay, we shall presently see that, through the perversity of the democratic leaders, it prolonged these perils unnecessarily. It is another of those great myths, of which the history of the Revolution is so full, that this proscription was the turning point of the war. This very levy *en masse*, which was expressly rejected by the Convention, has been celebrated as the means of liberating France from the yoke of foreigners!

The city party was not a little angry at the frustration of so well conceived and promising a plan. It was once more Danton upon whom their indignation principally fell; and soon afterwards, through a personal misfortune which befell Hebert, it came to an open breach between the two leaders. The matter of dispute was the appointment of the minister of the interior. The former minister, Garat, a refined but unprincipled man of letters, had fallen completely under the violent influence of Danton, and was on that very account persecuted, in every possible way, by the Parisian party. For a time Danton's protection supported him. The conventional *Comité de Sûreté générale*, which was, at that time, entirely composed of Dantonists, caused Garat's first assailant, a member of the city corn committee—who had accused the minister of starving the people—to be arrested as a disturber of the public peace; and soon afterwards Danton himself parried the blows of a more dangerous opponent in the Convention—Collot d'Herbois, who was closely connected with

the municipality. Garat, however, wanted courage for farther resistance, and, on the 15th of August, sent in his resignation to the Convention; whereupon Hebert's friends brought him forward as a candidate, in the full confidence of victory. Their disappointment, therefore, was all the more bitter when Danton's influence once more prevailed, and one of his most devoted friends, the procureur Paré, was chosen. Hebert's wrath now knew no bounds. In his journal, the *père Duchesne*, and in the Jacobin club, a storm of the most venomous abuse was directed against Danton and his "venal and treacherous creatures" in the *Comité de Sûreté générale.* Nay, Hebert went so far, in the Jacobin club, as to propose the formation of a constitutional ministry—i. e. one independent of the Convention—in other words, the overthrow of the power hitherto possessed by the Committee of Public Safety. A more express declaration of war could not be conceived; every day a violent outbreak might be expected.

For the present, however, matters were not carried so far. The two factions had still common dangers and common interests: and it so happened that these were sensibly affected in several ways, by other questions, and they were thus brought to a brief reconciliation. In order, however, to estimate the turn in affairs which now took place, in its full significance, it will be necessary to retrace our steps a little.

We may remember the successes which the democratic party had obtained, in the spring of 1793, in politico-economical and financial questions. The principle of the right to labour was acknowledged, the trade in paper money forbidden, a fixed price put upon corn, a forced loan on the rich was decreed, and the debt of 110 millions, which the State had made to the Commune, was virtually wiped out. It is true that of these things, the right to labour, and the forced loan, only existed on paper, for the present; and that the course of the assignats, in spite of all penal enactments, continued to sink after the 31st of May; the

fixed price of corn was, however, carried out in most of the provinces, but by no means in all. Yet this one measure had been sufficient to bring on the evils prophesied by the Gironde, and all competent judges, to a frightful extent. No one liked to give away his corn at so low a price; the produce markets were not attended, and the supplies were interrupted. In all the cities, and in the unfruitful districts which did not produce sufficient for their own consumption, the distress was horrible beyond all description.[1] People offered triple the maximum price in vain; the corn-dealers would not venture to expose themselves to the united chicanery of the mob and the law. In Montpellier pregnant women were crushed to death in the despairing crowds before the bakers' shops; in Auvergne starved children were found on the high-roads; and in the rich city of Rouen the inhabitants were unable to keep off the famine, though they had funds in hand to the amount of twelve million livres. These lamentable reports arrived daily in the Convention from all parts of the country; and so glaringly evident was the misery, and its causes, that, in spite of all their fear of the Parisian mob, the majority ventured to raise their voices, and, on the 1st of July, granted several alleviations in regard to the corn trade. The views of the Jacobins were very different. They had only one method of averting the bitter consequences of violence, and that was an increase of violence. If the exchange of paper money fell, in spite of the penal laws, the only thing was to force it up again by increasing the severity of the punishment.[2] If the peasants would not sell at the legal price, the government had now the power of forcing them to do so, on pain of death. No sooner had the first Committee of Public Safety fallen, and Robespierre's

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[1] Moniteur (June and July) passim.

[2] The government, however, carried on stock-jobbing on a grand scale during the whole summer, in order to depress the price of assignats, and then to buy them up in large quantities, and sell them again at a profit when a rise took place.

friends seized the reins of power, than Collot d'Herbois, the patron of the Hôtel de Ville, brought a motion before the Convention to punish every man with death, as a usurer and monopolist, who should possess a store of the necessaries of life—provisions, fuel, leather, iron, cloth and clothes—without giving notice of the same to the magistrates of his commune, and offering his goods daily and publicly for sale, at such prices as the authorities thought fit. It was the same day on which Robespierre was elected into the Committee, and the Convention confirmed the law without any opposition. Four days latter, Cambon proposed a measure for raising the price of paper money by lessening its quantity; in other words, by putting out of circulation the 1,500 million *assignats* which bore the image of the king. Thereupon a few members ventured to remark, that such a bankruptcy was rather calculated to depress the value of the residue; but these were violently called to order, and as, on the very same day, their prophecy came true, Couthon, on the 1st of August, carried a motion for increasing the punishment of selling *assignats* at a lower than their nominal value, to twenty years incarceration in chains. In order gradually to deprive the population of all other means of exchange, and at the same time to lower the value of specie, the investment of capital in foreign countries was forbidden on the 3rd—according to the motion of Couthon—on pain of death. Somewhat later the *Caisse d'escomptes*, and all similar financial societies, whose shares, it was said, competed injuriously with the *assignats*, were dissolved; and on the 15th of August, according to Cambon's report, the *republicanisation* of the entire national debt was decreed. All the creditors of the State, namely, were directed to send in the titles and deeds of their claims, on pain of having them disallowed; and in lieu of such titles, the capital was entered in a "great ledger of the national debt," and five per cent interest secured upon it. In this case, the forced exchange of an old and secure title for an extremely doubtful one, was an evident violation

of public faith. But the reduction of the interest of all State debts contracted at a higher rate, and the conversion of capital already fallen due into a yearly rent—in the case of the 433 millions of the *exigible* debt, and the 492 millions of the compensation promised for hereditary offices—was an open and unblushing robbery. The Convention was not so particular, cared little about the millions of French citizens whose property was hereby affected, and gave its sanction to the "great ledger," which closed it accounts with 200 millions annual *rentes* [1] amidst general clapping of hands. [2]

The value of the assignats, as we need hardly remark, was not raised even one per cent. by all these violations of law; on the contrary, at the end of August, a *livre* of silver was scarcely to be had for six *livres* of paper. The treasury, which received scarcely any taxes, and spent 200 millions a month for the war alone, had still no other resource than its paper money, which was continually sinking in value. The law respecting *accaparement* had just as little effect on the traffic in goods. In the same way as corn, all other goods now began to avoid the market: the *cafés* in Paris, e. g. were suddenly without sugar, because no dealer dared to confess that he had a supply sufficient for the demand. It was still more alarming that there were good reason for fearing that the same thing would happen in the case of bread, at no great distance of time. It was evident that all

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[1] Report of Cambon. Buchez, *Histoire parlementaire de la rév. fr.* XXXI, 446. [2] The great ledger, one of the few creations of the Convention which have survived their authors, has enjoyed in most histories of the Revolution a pretty general laudation, especially on account of the clearness which it is said to have brought into the national debt. No doubt order is an excellent thing, but in regard to debt it consists less in tabular distinctness, than in security and solidity; and a fraudulent bankruptcy cannot be made into an honest transaction by mere clearness, nor was the Republic preserved from any of its later bankruptcies by the orderly arrangement of the great ledger.

the threats of the law against *accaparement* would not favour the sale; on the 15th of August, therefore, direct compulsion was added to indirect, and powers were given to the conventional commissioners to make a certain requisition of corn from every acre of land. "It is an excellent method," said Barère, "by which the commissioners in Alsace have collected 100,000 cwt. in twenty-four hours." The operation of the new law may be understood from this same example. In the most fortunate case the Alsatian peasants received for their corn the price of the maximum in *assignats*—fifteen *livres* for the cwt.; as the market price was between 40 and 60 *livres*, they lost at least 25 *livres* per cwt., while the State thus raised an arbitrary additional tax of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions, in two Departments alone.

All these difficulties culminated, as usual, in the task of provisioning the capital, partly because the matter itself was of enormous proportions, and partly because it was always managed and turned to profit by the most unclean hands. We have seen that Cambon's refusal to throw new sums of money into this bottomless pit, was the first signal for the *coup d'état* against the Gironde; and that, subsequently, the Commune had extorted the *maximum* law, in order to be able to get the corn from the peasants at a low price. But these means were far from being sufficient. On the one side, the peasants denied having any corn at all, or hastened to sell it elsewhere; on the other, the finances of the city had been for years at so low an ebb, that it was impossible to procure funds for the purchase of corn, even at the *maximum* prices. The government, therefore, had to interfere again. They did so, as against the peasants, by granting to the Parisian agents, on the 15th, the right of military requisition, and by sending bodies of troops into several Departments to support them, on the 24th. They helped the necessities of the city treasury by making a new loan of 2 millions, on the 6th of August, and a week afterwards of 3 millions—sums for which the city was able to procure a supply of corn for nearly

two months.[1] The actual necessities of the people were supplied, but the restlessness of the Hôtel de Ville was by no means calmed. We do not mean that any serious want on the part of the working-classes had been apprehended in Paris; on the contrary, all wages had once more risen considerably, in consequence of the new conscription;—e. g. the usual day wages had reached the unexampled height of five *livres*, and therefore whoever was willing to work was quite safe from starvation. But the hiatus in those measures of the Government consisted in this, that no provision had been made for the personal advantage of the city demagogues, whose pretensions and claims were now greater than ever. Their object was, in short, to make the State grant the purchase-money to the full amount, not as a loan, but as a gift; to take away their corn from the peasants without any compensation whatever, and then to make the Parisian bakers pay for it at the original price. From this double extortion a booty would accrue to the city officials of at least 7 millions a month, which, though it had to be divided among a large number of democratic accomplices, was always sufficient to form the centre of great party movements.

Here again we meet with those sectional orators, Roux and Le Clerc, who came forward in June as rivals of the municipality in the question of the Constitution. On this occasion, also, they made use of the food question to rouse the mob against the rulers, whose lucrative places they desired to gain for themselves. They declared that Pache was a corn-usurer, that Hebert and Chaumette sold the bread of the people for their own advantage, and that the people must bring these bloodsuckers to condign punishment. Their machinations were carried on for a long

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[1] This and the following statements are made on the authority of the minutes of the Committee of Public Safety.

time without any effect, but they became disagreeable to the municipality and the Jacobins in general, because the Bourgeois were also shaken from their apathy by these disagreements, and willingly lent their support to the new friends of the people, against the magnates of the Hôtel de Ville. Thus the Sections once more shewed signs of life, and the municipalty remembered with angry terror the rising of the Bourgeois in May; this last had been a serious warning to all the Jacobin factions, how deeply the hatred against their rule was rooted in the nation, and how necessary a firm union was to their ownexistence. It was, therefore, with the full consent even of Robespierre that the Commune adopted vigorous measures in this direction, took Roux prisoner, and drove the Bourgeois orators from the Sections by cudgellings and arrests. The Jacobins were unanimous in the opinion that the aristocrats must be intimidated, the rich crushed, and the traitors annihilated. The revolutionary tribunal, incessantly urged on by Robespierre, sent Custine to the scaffold; complaints were continually heard in the Jacobin club against the *Comité de Sûreté générale*, for keeping back the materials necessary for the trial of the Girondists and the Queen. They must, it was said, go seriously to work to incarcerate all suspected persons, to provide cheap food for the poor, to raise a revolutionary army for the war against the native aristocrats. The city party once more raised its head, Robespierre energetically supported it, and Danton did not venture to swim against the stream. On the 29th of August, Billaud-Varennes, always a confidential friend of the municipality, with which he had sealed his alliance in the blood of the September massacres, came forward in the Convention. He had just returned from a mission to the Army of the north, had brought with him a number of complaints concerning its condition, and proposed the formation of a commission to watch over the execution of the Convention's decrees. Though this was an undisguised vote of want of confidence in the

Committee of Public Safety, Robespierre made a very feeble opposition to it, and Danton only evaded the stroke, by carrying a motion for adding three new members to the Committee; which was nothing more than a means of appeasing the Hebertists by giving them a number of seats in the cabinet.

The new predominance of the city party, and, which was the same thing, the decline of Danton's influence, was clearly manifested, in the administration of military affairs at home. Everywhere the military view of things gave way to the revolutionary. Once more the rulers paraded their contempt for the troops of the line, for methodical tactics, of military discipline, and professed to look for salvation to levies of the people *en masse*, to lawless impetuosity, and pitiless cruelty.

With Dubois-Crancé, who daily bombarded Lyons with shells and red-hot balls, but was too weak to try a regular siege, the Committee of Public Safety expressed their lively discontent, and, on the 21st of August, they sent off Robespierre's confidants, Couthon and Maignet, to bring up all the people from the neighbouring Departments, and then, without any regard to Dubois-Crancé, to finish the matter at once. The garrison of Mayence was ordered to La Vendée, and the whole male population of all the neighbouring provinces was likewise called out against the armed royalists. Until their arrival, Rossignol was directed to confine himself to defence, and not to begin the work of destruction until success was absolutely certain. It happened, in the interval, that Bouchotte dismissed the general of division Tunq, but that the order to this effect arrived in the latter's camp at Luçon, just as the main army of the Vendéans was preparing to attack him with all its force. The conventional commissioners, Bourdon and Goupilleau, who happened to be there, being both of Danton's party, and both already greatly irritated against the minister at war, annulled the deposition of the general; and Tunq had the good fortune, immediately after-

wards, to defeat the Vendéans with great bloodshed. Rendered confident by this victory, the commissioners, on their part — when Rossignol, in accordance with the system of the Committee, forbade the further pursuit of the enemy — decreed the dismissal of the general-in-chief, whom they justly reproached with utter incapacity in military matters. Rossignol, however, had likewise friendly conventional commissioners in his camp, who immediately hastened with him to Paris, and there occasioned the most scandalous discussions, both in the Jacobin club and the Convention. With regard to the two generals, it was universally allowed that, in a moral point of view, one was as depraved and infamous as the other; while, on the other hand, Tunq was known as an excellent soldier, and Rossignol as a zealous patriot and destroyer of aristocrats. This was sufficient to determine the decision of the Convention, and it was given entirely in favour of Bouchotte and Rossignol, and against the Dantonists. The two commissioners were recalled, and Rossignol was restored to his post with great éclat. Joy and triumph filled the minds of the whole Parisian party.

The noise of these abusive and quarrelsome scenes was suddenly interrupted by a report, which threw all minds into a state of the greatest excitement — the report of the loss of Toulon. We have already observed that the same Jacobin intrigues were carried on in this city as in Lyons; and, at last, after a series of political murders and shameless robberies, a plan was developed for a general plunder and annihilation of the whole upper class. The latter had for months patiently endured the most galling oppression, and were thoroughly frightened away from any attempt at resistance by the events of the 31st of May. The club, which in Toulon had a mass of sturdy sailors and rude workmen at their disposal, fixed the 14th of July for the execution of their great scheme: a list of several hundred victims was drawn up, and bands of murderers distributed through the different Sections of the city. In order to prevent the population

from making any counter-movement, the town-council issued a proclamation, to the sound of the trumpet, that any proposal to summon the sections to an assembly would be treated as a crime worthy of death. On the 12th, the club got up a military procession of its bands through the city, to excite the enthusiasm of its adherents, and to intimidate the Bourgeois, some of whose houses were already marked with red crosses, as signs for the murderers. On this occasion, however, terror made men bold. A poor artisan, the sadler Reboux, hitherto a zealous republican, and an enthusiast in the cause of the people, revolted at such atrocity. He summoned a number of citizens, late at night, to a remote church, and called upon them boldly to resist the murderers. His proposition met with unanimous approval; the cry for the opening of the sections spread through every quarter of the city; the town-council lost its presence of mind at the very first moment, and when the national guard made its appearance in the streets in full force, the bandits of the club dispersed without striking a blow. In a few days the aspect of affairs was entirely changed. A new municipality was formed, the leaders of the club were arrested, and five of the authors of the previous murders were sentenced to death and executed. In short, the occasion, and the original objects, of this rising were exactly the same as in Lyons; it was not a struggle for political power, or constitutional forms, but for the personal security of individuals.

If the people of Toulon had borne the yoke of the Jacobins longer than the Lyonese, they now proceeded on their way with all the more despatch and determination. There were no Girondists among them, who, while they execrated the Mountain, were zealous for the Republic: but the power immediately fell into the hands of the higher class of Bourgeois, and some officials of the marine department—calm and circumspect men, who, from the very first, clearly foresaw that they could look for no forgiveness from the Convention,

and resolutely commenced a contest of life and death. They had always been favourable to the constitution of 1791, and they now ordered the arrest of the two conventional commissioners in Toulon, and proclaimed the restoration of the constitution under king Louis XVII. They issued a summons through all the surrounding districts—to the crews of the fleet which lay in the harbour, and to the army of Italy stationed round Nice—for their adhesion and support. They had, however, but little success beyond their own walls. The smaller towns of the coast were entirely in the hands of the Jacobins, and the peasants were determined to watch the issue. The commissioners of the Convention attached to the army, Barras and Freron, employed every means of influencing the soldiers—raised their pay, distributed daily rations of wine,[1] and declared that Toulon was in league with the English, and wished to give up the fleet to the enemies of their country. They succeeded in this way in securing the fidelity of the regiments; and when, at the end of August, General Carteaux subdued Marseilles, the whole coast declared for the Convention, and Toulon saw itself completely isolated and exposed to a pitiless revenge. Under these circumstances the Bourgeois made up their mind, on the 23rd of August, to take a step which had previously been falsely imputed to them by Barras: they begged the English admiral, Hood, who, in conjunction with the Spaniard Langara, was blockading the harbour, to come to their assistance, and received a garrison of the allies into their fortress. The admiral declared that he would keep the town and the fleet for king Louis XVII., until the conclusion of peace.

This was a dangerous blow to the Republic. The loss of their best fleet, the raising of the royal banner, the alliance between the opposition at home and the European

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[1] Jeanbon's report to the *Convention nationale*, 9th December.

powers—it was difficult to say which of these things was the most perilous. The Convention could not find words wherewith to brand the baseness of this treachery. The people of Toulon, it was said, are not Frenchmen, they are no longer even men, they only exist in the history of perjury and felony. It was another signal to visit France with a fresh increase of terrorrism, to unite all the revolutionary parties, and to bring the policy of the government into accordance with the views of the most violent of the factions. The object in view was to subject the citizens throughout the country to an omnipresent and arbitrary police; to threaten every hostile movement with immediate destruction; and, lastly, to attach the tools of this tyranny, —the democratic proletaries—to the existing government, by holding out to them the prospect of booty and enjoyment. Before either the Municipality or the Club had issued a formal proclamation to the people, the Convention manifested its readiness to give full play to the wishes of the factions. On the 3rd of September they passed the long-desired decree of execution, in the matter of the compulsory loan of 1,000 millions; ordered a new reduction in the price of corn; forbade the corn trade in all parts of the country, and directed that Paris should be provisioned by means of requisitions, like a fortress in time of war. Two days afterwards, in full accordance with the views of Hebert and Robespierre, they decreed the division of the revolutionary tribunal into four sections, with an increased number of members, and thereby placed four criminal courts at the disposal of the rulers, instead of one.

All faces at the Hôtel de Ville were radiant with joy. "It is time," cried Hebert to the Jacobins, "to bring matters to a conclusion, to form the revolutionary army, to send the Girondists to the scaffold, and to smite the aristocratic officers one and all. Formerly this would have been dangerous, but now we have the upper hand, and must bestir our-

selves."[1] "It is true," said Robespierre, "that in spite of the loss of Toulon, our position is a splendid one, but the usurers and the starvers of the people must be crushed: let us exterminate the intriguers who dare to calumiñate a patriot like Pache."[2] "The Club," cried Rouyer, "must no longer talk but act; the people must rise and carry the Convention with them; they must make their way into every house, seize the traitors, and deliver them up to the vengeance of the law." Meanwhile this very people was rioting before the doors of the bakers, and then crowding to the Hôtel de Ville, where Chaumette ordered a general cessation of work in the city for the following day. He then went to the Convention to calm the fears of that body respecting the character of this movement, and at the same time to warn them against the aristocrats—i. e. against the Bourgeois population of several Sections. The tumult was continued in the halls of the Hôtel de Ville until late at night; the Jacobins declared their adhesion to the movement; a bureau was erected on the Place de Grêve, for the purpose of drawing up a petition to the Convention; and the mass of the people, crowding round it, incessantly raised the cry for bread. After these preparations Chaumette appeared in the Convention at mid-day, on the 5th, and spoke the first word of the day — formation of a revolutionary army. A great wave of human beings followed him into the hall of the assembly, who settled themselves on the benches with shouts and clapping of hands, and demanded the immediate passing of the decree. The joyful clamour rose higher and higher when Chaumette descanted on the question of provisions, and proposed to turn the gardens of the Tuileries into a potato-field; when Billaud-Varennes demanded the immediate arrest of all persons suspected by the people; when Danton, always ready to swim with the stream of popular

[1] Jacobin club, 1st December. — [2] Jacobin club, 4th September.

favour, procured a grant of forty sous a day for those who attended the sectional meetings, in order that the poorer people might not, through poverty, be obliged to leave the field to the rich. Then a deputation of Jacobins appeared, and put the finish to all these confused proposals. "Arrest all persons of noble birth," cried their spokesman, "send the Girondists immediately to the scaffold; let the columns of the revolutionary army march through the country, each accompanied by a guillotine; let it work until the last traitor is dead; let the sickle of equality be brandished over every head, and make terror the order of the day."

The Convention answered the proposition of the Jacobins, in the first place, by a decree, which denounced the punishment of death against the purchase or sale of *assignats;* and next, by a decree for raising a revolutionary army of 6,000 men of Paris, for the purpose of making war on the reactionists, carrying the revolutionary laws into execution, and protecting the provisions of the people. In order to secure the incarceration of suspected persons, the law which prohibited house-searching in the night-time was abolished; the appointment of new members to the forty-eight revolutionary committees of Paris was ordered by the municipality, and an unlimited power of arrest entrusted to them.

And thus passed this new holiday in the annals of the Revolution. Henceforward, as an orator of the Jacobin club remarked, any Frenchman could at any moment be legally thrown into prison;—henceforward every proletary was sure of his weekly pay, and every demagogue of unlimited booty from the property of his fellow-citizens. The city party began their rule in full triumph. Their friends in the Convention succeeded, on the 6th, in electing Billaud-Varennes, Collot-d'Herbois, and the insignificant but like-minded Granet, into the Committee of Public Safety; and, on the 9th, in occupying the *Comité de Sûreté générale* by a majority of their party. A circular was sent round to the

conventional commissioners in the Departments, directing that, where it had not yet been done, all offices of every kind should be taken from the Bourgeois and given to the zealous *Sansculottes*. And lastly, the municipality of Paris carried, off in full measure, the rich gains which they had longed for. Every week the Committee of Public Safety placed a million of *livres* at their disposal, nominally for the purchase of provisions, but, in fact, as a compensation for leaving the Committee in quiet possession of political power — as a democratic *apanage*. For, even according to the calculation of the Committee itself, a sixth of those sums, at most, was spent in buying corn, since, for the present, the magazines had been filled by the measures of August; and after a few weeks the columns of the revolutionary army began to move, and soon spared the Commune the trouble of making any payments. "At last" said Hebert, on the 10th of September, "at last the provisioning of Paris is secured."

The measures intended to realise, and carry out in detail, the system proclaimed on the 5th, soon followed. The 17th of September produced one law respecting the necessaries of life, and another respecting suspected persons — the former establishing absolute power over the property of the country, and the latter destroying the personal freedom of its inhabitants. The former fixed the price of all kinds of corn and fodder; crushed the private trade in these articles by a series of troublesome and even dangerous formalities, and entrusted the commissariat of the armies to conventional commissioners, who, for this purpose, received the right of requisition and, when necessary, of confiscation. As previous experience had taught, that, under such a system, a number of agriculturists would no longer till their fields, a preliminary enactment had been issued, on the 14th, according to which the communes were to be made answerable for the sowing of the lands; men, horses, and other cattle, were made liable to requisition for this purpose; and all negligent

labourers were to be punished by imprisonment, for not more than three months. Thus one measure of compulsion gave birth to others: the State was on the way to become the only farmer, the only merchant, the only manufacturer in the country — to undertake all the cares and labours of civil society, and to mete out their daily portions of bread to the inactive and impoverished masses. The system of requisition, which assumed that the State was the supreme proprietor of every thing, was daily reduced to practice: on the 20th, all the materials used in ship-building, — on the 27th, all the trees fitted to supply timber — on the 4th of October, all the mercantile vessels of the land — were placed at the disposal of the State. The State itself fixed the price of the articles, and, on the 29th, laid it down as a general principle, that all wares should be taxed at the average price of 1790, with the addition of a third; and that all wages should be fixed by the same standard, with the addition of a half. A special commission was empowered to enquire into, and settle, these innumerable values.

Such was the state of things with respect to the rights of property. As to the liberty of the person, the law of the 17th declared all citizens to be "suspected," who had either shown themselves in any way friends of tyranny, or had not duly paid their taxes, or had not received a card of citizenship from the local or sectional authorities. As this card was issued by the municipality, and had to be countersigned by the revolutionary committee, which could arbitrarily refuse its sanction — this arrangement placed the freedom of every citizen in the hands of a few persons, who had recommended themselves by party zeal to the club of the place, or the conventional commissioners, as members of the committee. Every suspected person was to be arrested, and guarded, at his own cost, in a locality specially prepared for the purpose, until the conclusion of peace.

Incredible as it may sound, this absolute power over person and property seemed not extensive enough to the Parisian party. When the Convention, on the 18th, decreed that whoever spread false intelligence concerning the war should be transported to Cayenne, Collot d'Herbois demanded that the law should have a retrospective force. A remnant of shame or mercy, to which the Dantonist Thuriot lent words, decided the Convention to refuse assent; whereupon Collot proposed that the prisons of "the suspected" should be undermined, in order to blow them up at the first manifestation of a refractory spirit. When this too was negatived, he commenced again, on the following day, with redoubled fury, by proposing that all merchants, who sold the necessaries of life at a high price, should be locked up; he said that he had tried this experiment during his mission in the Oise department, and had brought down the price of butter by one-half. "In fact," he said, "the suspected ought not to be tolerated in the land; even after the peace, but sent into perpetual banishment laden with the curses of the people." Even Robespierre protested against this, but drew upon himself such a violent attack from his irritated colleague, that he endeavoured to appease him by concessions, and recommended his first proposal — respecting the incarceration of merchants — as an example, at any rate, to the conventional commissioners in the provinces.

After the men in power had once made up their minds to try the patience of the French people to such a degree as this, and unreservedly to advocate the most unheard-of tyranny, the last step — the official abolition of the constitution, proclaimed six weeks before — might be immediately expected. If the nation could endure the laws of the 17th, it would also allow the continued existence of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. The postponement of such a declaration could only, at best, revive the envious ambition of the democrats who did not immediately enjoy the sweets of office; and in fact symptoms

of this kind made their appearance towards the end of September. The club of Cordéliers brought forward motions against the conventional commissioners, who did not respect the orders of the minister at war; and the Jacobins, for a moment, supported them. This was an agitation similar to that of Hebert for a constitutional ministry — an aspiration of Bouchotte and the municipality against the Convention. Another time it was the majority of the Convention itself, the moderate men of the Centre under the Dantonist Thuriot, (formerly member of the Committee of Public Safety, which he had left from dislike of Billaud and Collot) who, when Houchard and other generals were dismissed, had shown symptoms of resistance to the Committee. Neither of these movements had any result, but the Committee, nevertheless, determined to bring matters to an issue.

In the first place, Robespierre's friend Amar, on the 3rd of October, brought forward the long expected impeachments of the Girondists in the name of the *Comité de Sûreté générale*. Besides the twenty previously proscribed persons, it was directed against forty-two deputies,[1] who had been, for the most part, already arrested, and who were sent to the revolutionary tribunal for immediate trial. Then came the seventy-three representatives who had signed the protest against the 2nd of June, discovered at the house of Duperret—all of them members of the Right and Centre. Amar proposed to arrest them, and to allow the *Comité de Sûreté générale* to give a further report upon their case. On this point a discussion took place among the rulers themselves. The extreme Left wished to send them without delay to the scaffold, with the forty-two; but Robespierre interfered, and carried Amar's motion. He probably intended to make use of their services at some future time, and under altered circumstances, against the Hebertists; and

[1] This number is taken from the two incorrect lists. authentic list. The Moniteur has

for the immediate object — the unconditional subjection of the Centre — the proposed measure was quite sufficient. This becomes still clearer when we find that the sittings of the Convention, at that time, were attended by scarcely 300 members,[1] and that the Mountain, in the absence of about 140 deputies on missions, never numbered more than a hundred. Under these circumstances, the elimination of seventy-three opponents had a double importance.

Thus secure of the Convention, the Committee of Public Safety came forward, on the 10th of October, with the sentence of death against the new Constitution. Ever since the 5th of September, they had caused petitions to be sent up from the clubs and rural communes, praying that the Convention would remain at its post as long as freedom was in danger. This was so much a matter of course, that the decree did not consider it advisable to mention it. Its essential provisions were to the effect; that the provisional government of France, until the conclusion of peace, was a revolutionary one; that ministers, generals, and local magistrates, were under the superintendence of the Committee of Public Safety; that all authorities were bound to carry out the revolutionary enactments as speedily as possible; that the Committee, on its part, should hurl the revolutionary army upon the enemies of the Revolution, draw up exact accounts of all the provisions in France, apportion to every man what was necessary for his maintenance, and subject the rest to requisition. The report with which St. Just brought in the law, in the name of the Committee, frankly declared, in bombastic periods, the sentiments and intentions of the new government. It announced to all officials, committees and commissioners—in a to word all democratic rulers,—that the Committee demanded of them

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[1] About 200 never came out of than a hundred were proscribed or the committees into the *plenum;* more absent on missions.

diligence, order and strict obedience. As a compensation to them, it was announced to the nation; that, for the foundation of the Republic, it was indispensable that the will of the sovereign people should crush the royalist minority, and rule over it by right of conquest. And thus this Republic, with brutal candour, proclaimed that, being intolerable to an unfettered people, and inconsistent with legal freedom, it rested on the sword alone. Its self-confidence was sufficient to make it believe, that in this confession of weakness, it was manifesting both power and courage.

CHAPTER II.

END OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1793.

50,000 men despatched from the Vosges to Flanders.—Officers of high birth ejected from the army.—Houchard general of the army of the north.—His plan of operations.—Battle of Hondschotten.—Dunkirk relieved.—The committee of public safety sanction Houchard's measures.—Fall of le Quesnoi, battle of Menin, retreat of Houchard.—Fall of Houchard.—Jourdan general of the army of the north.—The Austrians besiege Maubeuge.—New French tactics.—Actual numbers of the troops and armies.—Battle of Wattignies.—End of the campaign in Flanders.—Jourdan dismissed.—The Austrians attack Alsace.—General Pichegru.—General Hoche.—Hoche forms a junction with Pichegru.—The former receives the command of the armies of the Moselle and Rhine.—And gains a complete victory over Wurmser.

We have seen, in the preceding book, the position in which the belligerent powers stood to one another, after the fall of Mayence and Valenciennes. The Sardinians came to a standstill on the Italian frontier, because Austria obstinately refused the aid which was so repeatedly asked for. On the Rhine, Wurmser directed all his efforts against Alsace, thereby removing all ground of apprehension for the interior of France; and he had completely broken off friendly relations with Prussia. On the frontiers of Flanders, Coburg stood with one division before Lequesnoi, Orange, with another, near Menin, and York, with a third, before Dunkirk. The French government had received full and trustworthy information, that no zeal for the war was to be found among the Allies, nor any serious plans of aggression; and they were

therefore able quietly to take measures for safety at home, and conquest abroad.

According to the whole position of affairs, the northern theatre of war was the most important to Paris, and the Rhenish, the least so. Even before the fall of Valenciennes, therefore, the Committee of Public Safety had recurred to the system of Custine (who had just been arrested), which was, to secure success in Belgium, by drawing the Rhenish forces into that quarter. On the 21st of July, therefore, they decreed that 21,000 men — taken partly from the Moselle army, and partly from the army of the Ardennes— should march to Valenciennes. When this place had fallen, and Kilmaine driven beyond the Scarpe, they issued an order, on the 8th of August, for the despatch of 30,000 more men from the Moselle army, for the transport of which a sum of five million livres was granted to the minister at war.[1] It was the only means, but it was perfectly effectual. In the northern Departments the exhaustion and discontent of the inhabitants made further levies hazardous,[2] and there were no other troops of the line in the neighbourhood. It is certain, therefore, that if the allied armies on the Rhine had prevented the despatch of those reinforcements, by vigorous and well-conceived offensive movements, France would have been without the means of resisting Coburg's operations. Now, however, the French had only to maintain themselves in the beleaguered fortresses until the arrival of these reinforcements; the Republic would then be sure of being able to oppose the enemy at every point with overwhelming numbers.

In this expectation the government employed itself, during the month of September, in what was called the patriotic

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[1] Minutes of the Committee. — [2] This levy was attempted later in the autumm; the men deserted by hundreds, and were captured again by the cavalry in great *battues*. Deschamps to the Committee of Public Safety, 29th December; and on many other occasions.

purification of the armies—i. e. the expulsion of all officers, whose birth or opinions rendered them obnoxious to the new rulers. It was of no avail to General Kilmaine that he had just brought the northern army, by great skill and good fortune, over the Scarpe. "He was not born in France," said a commissioner, "and will never like us;" — "He has laid open the road to Paris," said another, "in order to cover the frontier districts; it is evident that he has an understanding with Coburg." During his mission to the Army of the north, Billaud-Varennes dismissed and arrested six generals in one day. On a similar circuit, Ronsin denounced four generals, and seventeen superior officers, as "aristocrats, noblemen, and foreigners," all of whom, he said, were odious to the patriots. A charge brought by a town council, a club, or even by a single patriot, was sufficient to ruin a general: Omeara, the commandant of Dunkirk, e. g. was immediately suspended by Bouchotte, on the information of a democratic surgeon. The troops were thus suddenly deprived of their former officers, more than seven hundred of whom were dismissed from the Rhine army within a few weeks; it was no wonder that all discipline was lost, and that excesses of every kind were the order of the day. In addition to this, the clubs cried out against the ill-treatment of their warlike brethren, whenever the latter were punished; the troops of the line and the volunteers were perpetually quarelling; and the supplies for the army were every where interrupted, because even the military magazines were used to feed the Parisian mob. Meanwhile, to increase the confusion, swarms of peasants belonging to the general levy continually arrived; envoys from Paris hawked the journals of Hebert and his associates through the camp; noisy tumults arose in the regiments against treacherous officers and English gold; and the soldiers, brave as they were, lost all their firmness and self-confidence when they lost their discipline. They abused their generals for continually retreating, but, at the first alarm, threw away

their weapons and fled in crowds.[1] And thus it came to pass, that the Army of the north, which at the end of July had numbered 97,000 men — without reckoning garrisons — between Maubeuge and Dunkirk, lost seventeen thousand men,[2] after the taking of Cæsar's camp, without any serious battle; and that all the bodies of recruits despatched to the army disappeared like dew in the sand. The cause was always the same, the composition of the democratic government, which squandered its boundless resources, amidst high sounding speeches and wild confusion.

General Houchard, the late commander of the Moselle Army, succeeded Kilmaine as chief of the Army of the north. Custine had once said of him, that he was well fitted to lead a division, but was a lost man if he ever undertook an independent command. This was a just estimate of Houchard: he was a *sabreur* of slow conception and weak character, who had gained the favour[3] of the Committee of Public Safety by patriotic boasting and abuse, and had thereby been inspired with a brief confidence of victory. But he had no sooner entered on his new duties, than he was carried away, without power of resistance, by the whirlpool of cares, deficiencies and dangers. In every corps he found a number of popular representatives who besieged him with ardent, or brutal, and always contradictory, importunities. The minister at war wrote to him that he must not listen to talented technologists, but to the zealous *Sansculottes*; and added, that he could not give him any particular advice, but that the country expected great things of him. The staff of the army, like every other ruling body at that time, was torn by internal dissensions, and divided

[1] This is all taken from the despatches in the military archives at Paris. — [2] According to the army lists in the military archives. — [3] He wished to employ the garrison of Mayence against the Prussians at once, in spite of the capitulation, because, he said, republican soldiers could not be bound by the promises of a bad commandant.

into three parties, each of which, with violent complaints against their opponents, tried to get possession of the general. The most able of these were unquestionably the General-Adjutants, Barthelemy and Vernon, who, fortunately for the army, soon obtained the lead, but who, unfortunately for the general, were known as adherents of Custine, and therefore hated by the Hebertists. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to take a single step without discussions and hindrances; and while the government incessantly urged him to make a bold advance, the general shrank from every undertaking which was not certain of success, because the slightest failure would certainly be punished by the conventional commissioners as treason.

Houchard's first idea was to make a diversion against Maritime Flanders, which was at that time almost entirely unoccupied; for which purpose he drew off 3,000 men from the Ardennes Army, and portions of his most important garrisons, which were gradually replaced by national guards from the interior. But just at this moment, on the 18th of August, he received news that the Duke of York was leading 37,000 men against Dunkirk; and likewise of the disastrous battles in the forest of Mormal, by which Coburg prefaced the storming of Lequesnoi. He determined, therefore, to await the arrival of reinforcements—which were being transported in carriages from the Moselle Army—before undertaking any expedition of his own. The danger of Dunkirk at first sight seemed great. The garrison of 8,000 men was by no means sufficient for the extent of the walls; the merchants were exasperated by the laws of the *maximum* and *accaparement*, and the sailors of the harbour were disobedient and mutinous.[1] Fortunately for the French, the indolence and disorder of the Allies were

[1] Some information on this point in Rousselin, *Vie de Hoche*, vol. II. init. A more detailed account in the correspondence of the war ministry.

infinite. York took nine days to march about sixty-five miles, and on his arrival had neither engineers, nor heavy artillery, nor other siege materials.[1] He looked in vain, to the very end of the siege, for the appearance of the English fleet, so that the place remained quite undisturbed on the sea-side. But what was still worse, the weakness of the Allied Army made a complete blockade, even by land, impossible. While York pitched his camp on the east side of the fortress, Houchard was able to send continual reinforcements of troops, artillery, and materials of all kinds, from the west; and before York could get his batteries ready, the new commander, the energetic Souham, began to assume the offensive at all points. York had posted about half his army, under the Hanoverian general Freitag, about fourteen miles to the south-east of Dunkirk, as a protection against the French camp at Cassel. But the position of his divisions became extremely critical when Souham opened the sluices on the southern front of the fortress, and thereby laid the flat lands for a considerable distance several feet under water. By this step immediate communication between York and Freitag was cut off, and the former had no other line of retreat than the road to Furnes, on a narrow dam between the sea-coast and miles of swamp. In this position the Allies received the attack of the French relieving army on the 6th of September.

As soon as York's designs against Dunkirk had become clear, Houchard had raised his left wing at Cassel—which would be exposed to the first shock—to the number of 23,000 men, and then collected about 40,000 men in the neighbourhood of Lille; while Coburg was observed on the Scarpe by at most 10,000 men of the main body, and by 12,000 men under General Gudin at Maubeuge. The reinforcements from the Moselle

[1] Ditfurth. "*Die Hessen in Flandern*, I, 106," on the authority of the official papers in the Hessian archives.

Army, 22,000 strong, were only a few days' march distant on the 25th of August, and were destined partly to strengthen the corps which was observing Coburg at Maubeuge, and partly to enable the main army to deal a decisive blow at Lille. York and Coburg, each exclusively occupied with his own siege operations, took little notice of these accumulations of troops. The only thing which Coburg did, was to summon Beaulieu from Namur, with eight battalions, and to post him at Orchies, some miles in front of himself, in the direction of Lille. Besides these, as we have already remarked, 13,000 Dutchmen, under Orange, were stationed exactly opposite Lille—in widely scattered posts, and in complete isolation—between the two main camps, about thirty-three miles from Quesnoi and forty-seven from Dunkirk.

Upon the knowledge of these facts, Barthelemy and Vernon formed a plan, which, if energetically carried out, promised the most splendid results. It consisted in falling upon the positions of the Dutch with 40,000 men, and, after defeating and dispersing them, in following them up in quick pursuit past Ypres on the north-west, and down the Lys to Furnes and Niewport. From the superior numbers of the French this might be effected, before Coburg received any certain intelligence of the object of the enemy's movements. When once they had reached Furnes, the French army would be in the rear of the divisions of York and Freitag, who were separated by the water, and threatened in their front by the camp at Cassel; the republicans might hope, therefore, to capture, at any rate, York and his soldiers, to the very last man, between the swamps and the sea. Coburg would then hardly be able to maintain himself any longer in Belgium against his victorious adversaries.

In a consultation held, on the 25th of August, with the conventional commissioners, Vernon explained the particulars of this plan with great zeal, technical knowledge, and eloquence. Houchard supported him, and the commissioners gave a kind of half consent. But very soon a number of

scruples were suggested, the most important of which, after all, was, that the scheme originated with a friend of Custine, "whose eyes," wrote one of the commissioners to the Committee of Public Safety, "do not please me at all." The zeal of the generals was hereby perceptibly cooled, and when a preliminary attack made upon the Dutch, on the 27th, (even before the arrival of the Rhenish troops) had no result, Barthelemy gave up the enterprise. "Our troops," he wrote on the 29th, "are still too little accustomed to order and discipline, to allow of our beginning with such a bold game" — a game, he meant, in which the intervention of Coburg was, after all, within the bounds of possibility. In addition to this, a letter from the Committee, dated the 28th, arrived in the camp, in which Carnot urgently exhorted the generals to save Dunkirk. The loss of this city, he said, would produce a ferment through the whole of France, while a victory over York would be followed by a revolution in England (Carnot was thinking of the Edinburgh Convention, which was to meet in September); this question, therefore, he continued, was to be regarded, not so much from a military as a political point of view, and powerful bodies of men ought to be hurried up as quickly as possible to save Dunkirk at any price. Accordingly Houchard determined to deal the heaviest blow, not from Lille against the Dutch, but from Cassel against York—to send off 30,000 men to that place against the latter, and with 50,000 men to fall upon the 15,000 men of General Freitag. On the 3d he reported to Paris the plan which he had given up, and his reasons for doing so; and it was now Carnot who, on the 5th, by return of post, expressed his lively regret at the change; but acknowledging his own ignorance of the circumstances of the enemy, he gave the general full power to act as he thought fit. When this despatch reached the camp, it was too late for a second change. The struggle had already begun at Cassel, the army was marching against Freitag's position in six columns; the two most important

of which were led by Houchard himself, and Jourdan, who had just been made general of division.[1]

From the vast numbers of the French, the final result could not be doubtful. Yet the German soldiers continually displayed their great superiority. A handful of Hessian chasseurs (Colonel Prüschenk), and some battalions of Hanoverian grenadiers (General Dachenhausen) barred the progress of the great columns of the enemy by their immoveable firmness, and continual sallies, until the evening; — what might not have been done with such troops by a leader of any sagacity or energy?[2] Even in the middle of the night, when the French, advancing from their right wing, had already stormed the village of Rexpöde, behind the front of the allied centre, and had captured General Freitag, who was hurrying up, suspecting nothing, General Wallmoden with 400 Hanoverians recovered the place by an unexpected onset, liberated his commander, and made it possible for the other divisions to unite afresh further in the rear at Hondschotten. Here, posted between the canal which leads to Furnes and the gardens of the village of Leyzeele, with their centre at Hondschotten—a place protected by ditches and swamps, and only accessible by a single narrow dam—the Allies, 13,000 strong, awaited in the pouring rain, during the whole of the 7th, the attack of the French.[3] On the 8th, and not till then, Houchard renewed

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[1] We have enlarged so fully on these events, which are taken from official documents of the military archives (some of which are published in Legros' "*La Révolution telle quelle est*"), because Carnot is very often said to be the author of the first plan, and Houchard's deviation from it is given as the chief reason for his execution; and because Houchard's movements are every where represented as long prepared, and the battle of the 27th as a mere feint; and lastly because Jomini and those who follow him have stated the strength of the French at Hondschotten, at about half their actual number. — [2] Conf. Knesebeck: *Scenen aus dem Revolutionskrieg im Archiv des histor. Vereins für Niedersachsen*, 1845, S. 135 ff. — [3] Houchard to the Committee of Public Safety: "*J'attendis le jour et j'examinai s'il était possible de faire remarcher les troupes*

the onset, with redoubled zeal, leading no less than twenty battalions in person along the dam against the allied centre; while General Leclair endeavoured to push forward along the bank of the canal, and General Hedouville charged the left wing of the enemy at Leyzeele. The Hanoverians in the centre did not yield an inch, and kept up an artillery battle for four hours against fearful odds, until they had fired their last shot. The Austrians and Hessians at Leyzeele defended themselves with no less gallantry, and four times drove back the left wing of the enemy in wild confusion.[1] It was not until fresh reinforcements had been brought up, which completely outflanked the place, and were already sweeping with their shot the road to Furnes, the only line of retreat, that General Wallmoden gave the order to retire. Even then, while the French at last took the dam by storm, a Hessian battalion (General Cochenhausen) held Hondschotten, until the army had reached their camp at Furnes without further accident.

In spite of all this heroic courage on the part of the Germans, in spite of the error of the French in not throwing their chief force on Leyzeele, the key of the enemy's line of battle, the day had very important results. The allies had lost 4,500 men; the corps, now scarcely 11,000 strong, had no chance of maintaining itself any longer at Furnes, if the enemy pursued their advantage with energy. But if this place were given up, every chance of York's escape was cut off. The French, however, had also suffered terribly; their troops, though victorious for three days in succession, were in dreadful confusion, and a great portion of them, in spite of the commands of their officers, were

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au combat: jamais chose n'a été plus impossible. The soldiers have neither bread nor spirits, great numbers of them have run back to Cassel, Houchard is retiring to Herzeele, only a skirmish is taking place in the evening before Rexpöde." —

[1] Houchard's evidence at his own trial.

employed in plundering the places which they occupied.[1] The main political object however—the relief of Dunkirk—had been completely attained, and a division of the army marched into the town as early as the 7th. Houchard saw before him, between Hondschotten and Furnes, a marshy, and in some places inundated, plain, and this, too, like the approach to the battle-field of the preceding day, which had cost him so much blood, could only be passed by a narrow road. Incapable as he was of taking a comprehensive view of things, he could not make up his mind to march into this unknown ground. Even Carnot, in his letter of the 5th, instructed him not to undertake any thing decisive, if the issue were at all doubtful. In spite, therefore, of the importunities of the conventional commissioners, he decided to halt. The Duke of York thereby gained twenty-four precious hours, during which he withdrew from Dunkirk (without any further loss than the thirty-two ships' guns intended for the siege), and collected his whole force at Furnes, to the amount of about 30,000 men.

Houchard now completely lost all inclination to make any attacks upon the duke. His state of mind is completely reflected in his letter of the 10th, in which he informs Bouchotte of his victory, and then continues: "What am I to do now? I have considered the matter thoroughly. I do not think that I ought to march against Furnes, considering the strength of the enemy, and the wretched state of the roads. It will be better to defend myself here, to occupy the line of the Lys, and there to beat the Dutch. When this has been done, I shall check the English, who have been terribly cut up, with 20,000 men, and can march with 30,000 to the relief of Quesnoi." We see how painfully he wrestles

[1] "I had only 20,000 men together", says Houchard at his trial. Levasseur wrote to the Committee of Public Safety on the 16th of September, that after the capture of each village, everybody, even the officers, immediately hurried off to plunder.

with a task too difficult for him, how he weighs and wavers, and comes, after, all to no determination. He had, however, the satisfaction of receiving the full approbation of his superiors for his final resolution. Carnot, in his answer of the 13th, once more expressed his regret at the abandonment of the first plan of the 25th, but praised his intention of returning with all speed to relieve Quesnoi, since the news from that quarter was highly alarming; and he once more gave him absolute power to carry out his plans.

All the professional soldiers with whom we are acquainted, from general Jomini to Marshal Soult, are unanimous in condemning these resolutions. They all declare it to have been an error of the first magnitude, that Houchard did not complete the destruction of the Duke of York—which was certain on the 8th, and possible on the 10th—before turning against a new enemy. But this fact no one has remarked—because no one has hitherto examined the official documents—that these very mistakes of Houchard, either originated with Carnot and the Committee of Public Safety, or were, at any rate, unreservedly praised by them. As, in the former case, (on the 29th of August) Carnot's excessive anxiety about Dunkirk led to the abandonment of the first comprehensive plan of attack, so it was the fears of the government for Quesnoi, which affixed the seat of ministerial sanction to Houchards errors of the 10th of September.

Punishment followed with no halting step. Against the Dutch, indeed, the successes of Hondschotten were fully renewed: their scattered posts on the Lys, attacked with triple force—partly on the side of Poperingen, and partly on the side of Lille—defended themselves during the whole day, with greater constancy than had been expected; but they succumbed at last to the masses of men which were continually brought against them, and were finally driven back, in utter confusion, towards Ypres and Rousseler on the north, with a loss of 3,000 men. Menin, their last head-quarters, fell into the hands of the French, and was thoroughly sacked.

General Beaulieu,—whom Coburg had pushed forward beyond Courtrai to within a few leagues of Menin, to support the Dutch—did not venture to shew himself during the battle; in short the victory of the French appeared complete. But disasters came upon them in another quarter. Houchard had ordered a simultaneous attack on the Austrian divisions before Quesnoi, where a corps of 7,000 men, which advanced from Bouchain, was literally cut to pieces by twelve imperial squadrons (prince John of Lichtenstein); and, what was the chief point, when general Ihler pressed forward from Maubeuge into the forest of Mormal to relieve Le Quesnoi, he learned from the prisoners that all his exertions were in vain, since the fortress had already been two days in the hands of the Austrians. He would not believe it at first, but only too soon received melancholy confirmation of the fact. The case had been the same here as at Mayence and Valenciennes. The body of the place was uninjured; materials and provisions were by no means exhausted; but the soldiers lost their zeal, the inhabitants were anxious to see an end of the matter, and the commandant did not venture to resist any longer.

A mind of Napoleon's acuteness and resolution, in Houchard's place, would not even now have given up the game as lost. Though Coburg could dispose of his whole force, Orange, on the other hand, was put completely *hors de combat*, and York was in bad case, and at a great distance. The French general, by a few marches, might have united an army of 80,000 men between their separated divisions, and attacked one after the other with the greatest chance of success. But Houchard was not moulded of such strong materials. He heard that York was advancing by forced marches against Courtrai, and it was certain that Coburg would come up on the other side; he looked more to the dangers which threatened him, than to his own means of resisting them; he therefore determined to collect his forces —not for a forward movement, but for a carefully covered

retreat. On the 15th he ordered his troops to recross the Lys to Lille, to evacuate Menin, and to make a sham attack upon Beaulieu with the rear-guard, to mask his own retreat.[1] During this operation the loose discipline of the French, and their want of skill in manœuvring, were once more strikingly displayed. The evacuation of Menin had a discouraging effect upon the corps sent against Beaulieu; their attack was feeble from the very first, and the command to retreat dissolved the bands of discipline; and when a few of York's battalions came in sight on the north, the French fled in wild confusion over the Lys, leaving behind them six hundred killed and two guns. Two days afterwards York, and Coburg united their forces in the neighbourhood of Tournay, and the French columns took up their previous positions at Maubeuge, Lille and Cassel. It was all over with the aggressive plans of the 25th, and the deliverance of Dunkirk had been purchased by the loss of Le Quesnoi. Nevertheless the total result of the late operations was highly favourable to the French. For the first time in this year they had succeeded in an enterprise, and the impression made upon them was all the stronger, the more they had been struck by the excellence of the German troops. The soldiers had laid the first foundations of self-confidence, and their leaders had received fresh proofs of the palpable weakness of the hostile generals.

Houchard, however, was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his painful deliberations and exertions. When he led his troops over the frontier, his fate was already decided by the party feuds in Paris.

The opponents of Barthelemy and Vernon had incessantly besieged the minister at war with their complaints. For a while Houchard's influence maintained the upper hand, and some of the agitators were suspended. This only increased the

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[1] Levasseur to the Committee of Public Safety, 16th of September. This order gives the key to subsequent occurrences at Menin, which in previous accounts seem enigmatical enough.

rage of their party; Buchotte's commissioners spoke with vehemence of the friendship of those two generals with Custine, and obtained, in the first place, the dismissal of Vernon. Complaints were then made in the Jacobin club, that Houchard, like Custine and Dumouriez, ill-treated the patriotic volunteers. Then the conventional commissioners, Lacoste and Peyssard, two zealous Hebertists, proceeded to declare that Houchard's treachery was fully proved by his not pursuing the English. Lastly, letters of the general were produced, written during his command of the Moselle army, in which he treated with the Prussian commanders concerning an exchange of prisoners, used bitter language against the myrmidons of tyranny, and yet in their answers received assurances of their respectful devotion. The main thing, after all, was that Vernon's brother, an influential deputy of the Centre, violently attacked Bouchotte and his friends on account of the general's suspension, and thereby made Houchard's existence a vital question for the dangerous faction. Their adherents, as we know, were predominant in the Committee of Public Safety; and the latter decreed, on the 24th, the arrest of Houchard, Barthelemy and Vernon, and several officers of similar opinions. When protests were made in the Convention, Robespierre put them down with imperious emphasis, and extorted from the terrified assembly a vote of express assent. The fate of the accused was a matter of course. The investigation turned exclusively on the question, why York's army had not been entirely destroyed; no new facts were elicited, and the revolutionary tribunal unhesitatingly pronounced sentence of death, without paying any regard to the approbation accorded by the Committee of Public Safety to Houchard's measures.

The chief command of the Army of the north was now bestowed on general Jourdan, on the ground of the ability displayed by him at Hondschotten. Jourdan was the first of the revolutionary *parvenus* who were henceforward to shine at the head of the French armies, and subsequently of the

French state. He was the son of an insignificant surgeon in Limoges,[1] and entered the army when he was scarcely sixteen years old. After serving in the American war, he settled as a shopkeeper in his native town, from which he carried his wares to all the fairs in the neighbourhood. In 1791 he took service as a volunteer, and was soon afterwards chosen by his comrades, as an experienced soldier, to the post of *chef de bataillon*. In the disorder and lack of officers which prevailed in the Army of the north after Dumuriez' flight, he rose to the rank of brigadier-general, in May 1793, and, two months afterwards, to that of general of division. He was as zealous a republican as any one, but he displayed no eminent talent of any kind, and his education was so imperfect, that his despatches of this period are full of mistakes in spelling, and expressions smacking of the guard-room. He was, however, brave, devoted and indefatigable; and he shewed his sound sense by tenacious but fruitless protests against the perilous advancement bestowed upon him, until he was at last threatened with arrest if he refused to take the command. He felt somewhat relieved by the circumstance, that Carnot, on the 22nd of September, hastened in person from Paris to the frontiers to organize the defence, by which, at any rate, the constant bickering with utterly incapable, and therefore doubly presumptuous, commissioners was avoided. Carnot's presence, however, brought no other advantage with it, for neither the deputy himself, nor the general whom he guided and protected, were able to raise the quality of the troops, or to place the system of grand operations on an essentially better footing. The relative position of the two parties remained the same as during the whole of the previous struggle; the senseless mode in which the allies conducted the war constantly gave the French a chance of victory; and the unskilful manage-

[1] According to the *Biographie universelle*. Other writers give different accounts.

ment of the French as frequently preserved their enemies from utter annihilation.

Immediately after Houchard's retreat, and the pause in the offensive movements of the French, a new plan of conquest on the old pattern was drawn up at the head-quarters of the prince of Coburg. It was resolved to besiege another border fortress, and again without taking any other notice of the French armies, than the placing of a corps to observe them. Coburg's efforts were now directed against the fortress of Maubeuge, the garrison of which, including a fortified camp close to the town, was nearly 10,000 strong. For the blockade of this place, 14,000 Austrians and 14,000 Dutch, who were reorganised in Ghent after their defeat, were designated. General Clerfait, with 18,000 imperialists, was posted on the south of the Sambre to cover them; and the Duke of York, with about 40,000 men, was directed to secure the frontier from Valenciennes to the sea, by a long extended cordon. For this purpose 15,000 men, partly English and partly Austrians, were moved into the country between Mouscron and Menin; the Hanoverians undertook to guard the line from the Lys to the Ypres; the Hessians extended thence to Nieuport, where they rested upon the English garrisons of the last-mentioned town and Ostend.[1] These troops, as was evident at the first glance, had received no other orders than to ward off the attacks of the enemy. Jourdan therefore might have contented himself with posting a small number of men to observe the allies, and bringing overwhelming numbers, first against Clerfait, and subsequently against Coburg.

His army had at this period sufficiently increased to remove any obstacle, arising from a deficiency of numerical force, which might stand in the way of energetic operations. The Army of the north, exclusive of garrisons, amounted,

[1] The numbers are according to the lists. The superiority of force so often dwelt upon had no existence.

on the 1st of October, to 105,000. The quality of these troops, indeed, was not very satisfactory. The cavalry, even now, numbered scarcely 9,000, the infantry of the line 30,000 men; all the rest were national guards, volunteers, or recruits of the new levy, whom Carnot and all the generals unanimously declared to be of very little use. They were ready, indeed, to make a furious charge against the enemy's batteries; but of persevering steadiness in battle, of tactical capacity, and patience under toil and hardship, not a trace was to be found among them. The government had no other advice to give to the leader of such troops than to throw them again and again upon the enemy, no matter whether in good or bad order—no matter whether the loss incurred was great or small. The immediate consequence of this system was an infinite waste of human life, which, however, caused the originators of the system of terror but little anxiety, as long as they could collected substitutes in the thickly peopled land. A further result was apparent in respect to tactics; the attack was made with scattered bodies of men, and large swarms of skirmishers, to an extent which had never yet been seen. The reason of this lay chiefly in the incapacity of the soldiers for any other evolutions; or as, the official accounts expressed it, "the impetuous courage of republicans needed not the pedantry of art." But that which had the greatest influence on the officers was the—not republican, indeed, but very instructive—example afforded by the peasants of La Vendée, who, having never been formed according to military rules, first fired from behind trees and hedges, and then by a wild rush broke through the lines of their opponents. The Convention, whose forces were likewise very deficient in discipline, were recommended on all sides to adopt this method, [1] and the Committee of Public

[1] Conf. e. g. Barère's report, Conv. nat. 26th of July;—letter of an officer named Felix, Moniteur 1st of August. The correspondence published in the "*Guerres des Vendéens*" is full of the same views.

Safety of July has the credit of learning a lesson from the most hated of its enemies.

Still further and more painful experiences were necessary to induce the republican rulers to exchange the present mixture of anarchy and tyranny, in the department of the army, for a more judicious system. All which had hitherto made up the military administration—commissariat and clothing, transports and hospitals—was in a state of dissolution and ruin; and in spite of the arbitrary despotism, and the enormous amount of *materiel*, with which they now endeavoured to effect a reformation, the consequences of the present disorder were for the time most terrible. A few figures will suffice to bring these results before our eyes. The army of the north, as we have before mentioned, contained 105,000 actual combatants; but the nominal strength amounted at that time to 140,000 men, so that the loss in detachments, men under arrest and sick etc., amounted to more than a quarter of the whole army, and of these more than half were in the hospitals—an unexampled state of things in an army stationed in its own country. At the end of the month the evil had increased; when, of a nominal force of 160,000 men, only 115,000 were fit to take the field.[1] The case was the same in all the armies which the Republic kept on foot at this period; in spite of the unlimited power and wild energy of the government, the actual number of soldiers was always much below the official statements.

The difference appears all the more glaring, because the leaders of the Mountain always followed the principle of falsifying truth itself by boastful representations. The most

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[1] Not including garrisons. In Austria it was, at that time, an understood custom intentionally to exaggerate the nominal strength of the army; but such a difference as the one described in France seldom occurred. In the spring of 1794, e. g. the imperial army in Belgium ready for the field amounted to 115,000 men, but the nominal strength was only 160,000 *including* the garrisons.

striking example of these bombastic falsehoods is found, where one would least expect to find it, in the statement of the number of existing armies. Who has not heard it stated as a certain and acknowledged fact, that, in October 1793, the Republic had fourteen armies, and in round numbers a million, or 1;100,000, or even 1,200,000 soldiers, under arms? But the official papers of the war-ministry, and the lists of the regiments, prove that instead of a million, the strength of all the French armies present in the field was 393,000 men, and, consequently in all, including the garrisons, 600,000 men;[1] so that, according to the proportion pointed out above of one sick out of every three soldiers, the nominal force would be at most 800,000 men. It is still more surprising—although no historical fact is more certain than this—that the much-lauded fourteen armies had no more existence than the million soldiers, if, at least, the word army is used, in its common sense, of a considerable mass of troops under an independent general.[2] In March, the Convention had divided its forces into eleven armies, operating independently of one another. But even among these the following figured in autumn as separate armies: the Ardennes Army of 10,000 men, which was always placed at the disposal of the generals of the Army of the north—the Armies of the Rhine and the

1 At the end of 1793 the lists give in round number: Army of the Ardennes and the North 103,000; army of the Moselle and Rhine 100,000; Army of the Alps and Italy 40,000; East and West Pyrenees 60,000; against La Vendée 90,000. Total in the field 393,000. Garrisons in the North and the Ardennes 85,000; on the Rhine and Moselle 59,000. We do not know the lists of the other garrisons, but it is clear that the sum-total would not exceed 600,000. 2 In the *depôt de la guerre* there is a special memoir on this subject, based on the official documents, from which the following statements have been taken. The more important contents of it, however, were already published in 1808 in the *Tableau de la Guerre de la Révolution*, I. 376, but this publication made no impression upon the great mass of subsequent French historians.

Moselle, which amounted together to 100,000 men, and had the same task, that of fighting the allies in the Palatinate—the Armies of the Alps and of Italy, in all scarcely 40,000 men, and both employed against the Sardinians—the Armies of the East and West Pyrenees (small detachments of 31,000 and 28,000 men), which had only a few insignificant skirmishes with the Spaniards—and, lastly, the Armies of the West, of Brest, and of Cherbourg, which amounted together to 50,000 men in June, and 90,000 in December; and were all intended for the one great struggle against the Vendéans and the Chouans. These eleven armies, therefore, were really only employed in five theatres of war, on only five distinct and separate services, in which the multiplication of commanders-in-chief could only produce a very injurious effect on the object in view. But even these only make up *eleven*, and not *fourteen* armies: this last number, which was afterwards palmed upon the history of the world, was arrived at thus; the 12th place was given to the garrison of Mayence in La Vendée, although it was placed under the orders of the general of the Brest army; the corps before Toulon—formed of the troops of the Army of the Alps and Italy, and the national guards of the surrounding country—was called the thirteenth army; and, lastly, came a so-called *armée intermédiaire*, which, however, was not created but only imagined. The formation of this last army was entrusted, after the fall of Valenciennes, to general Bélair, for the protection of Paris; but it really only served as a depôt for the recruits of the Army of the north, and after two months was formally incorporated with it.[1] If it is an honour to the Republic to have set fourteen armies on foot in such a manner, modern

[1] When at the end of December, and the *armée intermédiaire* did not at the festival in celebration of the exist, the authorities inserted in the taking of the Toulon, the fourteen programme: an *Armée du haut Rhin*; armies were to be represented, and to which they added the *Armée re-* unfortunately the army of Mayence *volutionnaire!*

Germany may evidently lay claim to a double measure of renown, since it possessed from 1815 to 1866 no less than thirty-three!

These general observations were indispensable, both to place before us a picture of the revolutionary government, and to enable us to form a judgment of the various operations of the war. It would evidently be unjust to estimate the merits of the generals appointed to rule over this chaos, according to the usual standard; and it is doubly clear that the Convention, which had created all this confusion, acted with unheard-of barbarity, when it punished every failure with the scaffold. The question—which under all circumstances remains independent of the disordered state of the military administration—is as to the relative merits of the generals in respect to creative ideas, ingenious plans, and sustained energy; and in these respects Carnot and Jourdan will not appear in a very different light from Coburg or Houchard.[1] For it is very remarkable, that with the same tenacity with which the allies before Maubeuge repeated the mistakes which had injured them four months before at Dunkirk, Jourdan held fast to those same mistakes of Houchard, which had saved the enemy from utter destruction. He was no doubt right to post the battalions of the new levy, as being utterly untrustworthy, far away from the enemy at Vitry:[2] but it was an unnecessary dispersion of his forces to watch every post of York's cordon by a superior force, and thus to render 50,000 men between Lille and the coast unavailable for his main blow. Consequently he had now only 45,000 men for the attack upon Clerfait, and he once more owed

[1] I may here refer to the correct and calm judgment of Marshal Soult, and to the official papers of the campaign of 1794, which will be quoted in the 3rd volume. [2] *La nouvelle levée*, he writes on the 3rd, *n'est pas tout-à-fait organisée, la majeure partie des bataillons formées n'a point d'armes, il ne peuvent remplacer les anciennes troupes.*

it to the mistakes of his opponent, rather than to his own arrangements, that he was still able to appear on the battle-field with nearly therefold superior numbers. At Wattignies, on this occasion, on the 15th and 16th of October, all the characteristic features of the affair of Hondschotten were once more seen. Jourdan, like Houchard, made his attack with a number of detached columns, which were unable to render each other mutual support; like Houchard, too, he only gradually learned, in the course of the fight, the position of the key of the enemy's line of battle. As at Hondschotten, the German troops for a long time repelled the attacks of superior numbers with unshaken confidence, perpetually rushing forward to deal an after-thrust; and it was not until the second day, when they were driven from the key of the position—the village of Wattignies—by a great accumulation of of the enemy's forces, that Coburg resolved to discontinue the siege and retire across the Sambre. Coburg effected this retreat in perfect order, undisturbed by Jourdan, who was not at all sure of the result; and he carried off twenty-seven captured guns without the loss of any cannon or colours of his own. The result was the same in this case, as after the battle of Menin; the Allies paused in their attack, but had not the slightest fear of any danger in their own country.

Carnot was perfectly aware of the trifling nature of this success, and hastened back to Paris to inform the Committee of Public Safety of it. But he found the intoxication of victory so great among his colleagues, that he was obliged, on the 18th, to send orders to the generals to clear the French soil of the foreign hordes of robbers in a few days, and either to drown the army of the tyrants in the Sambre, or to exterminate them in some other way. On the 22nd more special instructions were sent: Jourdan was directed to cross the Sambre, to surround the enemy, to throw him back in the portion of the country which he occupied, to destroy

his magazines, and to cut him off from his communications. To this end he was to try a *coup de main* against Namur, to send off one division against Mons, another against Tournai, and to endeavour to form a junction with these, either by investing Mons and Tournai, or by taking up a position between these two towns and the frontier. It would have been impossible to issue orders more at random, or less in accordance with the actual state of things, with the condition of the troops—of whom a fifth were without arms, and two-thirds without shoes—or with the position of the hostile armies, which stood ready for battle between three captured fortresses.[1] Carnot, therefore, in a special letter, added the remark: that it was by no means wished that Jourdan should penetrate into the interior of Belgium, and that the expulsion of the enemy from French soil was all that was desired of him. The general was thereby placed in the most painful position; for between these contradictory orders only one thing was certain, that his head was at every moment endangered. To make the matter still worse, another order reached him, which considerably diminished his strength—viz. to send off 15,000 men to La Vendée, and the same number to the Rhine army; so that, in spite of the continued stream of recruits, 90,000 men at most were left at his disposal. In this embarrassment he did what he could; made a few demonstrations on the Sambre, a few attacks on the Lys, and then induced a friend of Carnot's, the conventional commissioner Duquesnoi, to represent the utter impossibility of further successes in the field during the severe season. The Committee withdrew its instructions,[2] but Jourdan was soon made to feel how little protection Carnot could afford him against the displeasure of the government.

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[1] Opinion of Marshal Soult.

[2] Carnot to Jourdan, 4th of November: *Le comité a cru devoir fixer moins impérieusement le système des operations.*

Thus closed the campaign on the Flemish theatre of war. For a few weeks longer the two adversaries harassed each other by alternate attacks on either side of the frontier, losing more men from hunger, cold, and fatigue, than in battle; until, at last, towards the end of December, both sides took up their winter-quarters. Jourdan, by a sensible arrangement, united his troops in as large bodies as possible, that the new and untrained battalions might not be exposed to the attacks of the enemy. But as it was hereby rendered possible for the light troops of the allies to undertake plundering forays against unguarded border districts, the Committee continually urged him to extend his quarters—i. e. to adopt the system of cordons, by which Coburg and York had lost the campaign. Jourdan protested several times with increasing emphasis, and thereupon suddenly received orders, on the 6th of January 1794, to go to Paris and answer for himself. On his arrival there he learned that the Committee had decreed his dismissal on the same day: he might think himself fortunate that Bouchotte's intercession saved him from the scaffold, which, in other cases, was the regular consequence of such displeasure.

About the same time a decision, still more pregnant of consequences, was taken on the Middle Rhine. We have still to relate how the internal discord of the Allies, in this quarter, had had a still more disastrous effect than the incapacity of the commanders in Belgium; and how, at the same time, on the French side, a real military genius had for the first time seized the conduct of affairs, and immediately obtained a most important success.

Before the king of Prussia left his Rhenish army, he had to be present at one more attack upon the French army of the Moselle; and indeed it was only with great reluctance that he turned his back upon the fresh breezes of the camp, and the brilliant images of warlike glory. Ever at the head of the Hohenlohe column, he had seen how the enemy's positions were broken up, and the hastily collected hordes of

peasants [1] driven back over the Saare. He then repaired to Posen; and Brunswick soon afterwards received instructions to part with 6,000 men for the blockade of Landau. He was ordered in other respects to continue his support to the Austrians, but never to implicate the troops in such a serious undertaking, as to prevent their being at any moment at the free disposal of the king. For in consequence of the negociation with Lehrbach, a firm resolution had been come to, either to take no farther part in the war at all, or at any rate not to join in it in the following year, unless the Allies would pay the whole of the expenses.

After the Moselle army had been driven back towards the west, as described above, Ferraris and Wurmser at last resolved to undertake the long-intended storming of the lines of Weissenburg. While Wurmser attacked these lines in front, the Prussians descended from the Kettrich, and, having advanced through the mountains, might have taken the French army in the rear, and thereby perhaps have ensured their destruction. Such comprehensive operations, however, were not to be thought of: the duke did not choose to expose himself to the Army of the Moselle, and could not disobey the orders of his cabinet; he therefore contented himself with placing 7,000 men from his left wing at the disposal of the Austrians, for the above-mentioned purpose. But even these were engaged in no serious fighting, because the French gave up the much-lauded lines, almost without resistance, at the first volleys of the Austrian columns, and made a hasty, and consequently a bloodless, retreat to the immediate neighbourhood of Strasburg (13th of Oct.). Wurmser was full of haste and triumph, hoping to take Strasburg by a *coup de main*, with the help of some royalists in the city; and was greatly pleased at the reception which he met with from the population of most of the villages. But the peasants

[1] They are called "*Spiessbauern*" in the German reports, and more euphoniously *agricoles* in the French.

were soon disgusted by the robberies of the Austrian "red-cloaks," (the Seressan Croats) and the brutality of the French *emigrés*, and manifested no further German sympathies; the conspiracy in Strasburg was discovered by the conventional commissioners, and drowned in the blood of its authors.

At the same time, the relief of Maubeuge and the cessation of the struggle on the Belgian frontier gave the Committee of Public Safety time and means to give a new turn to affairs on the Rhine also. Their first care was directed to the internal and external strengthening of the troops. Since September the Rhine Army had numbered 52,000 men, of which, however, 14,000 were *agricoles*, or peasants of the *levée en masse*, so that they could only oppose 38,000 real soldiers to the 46,000 under Wurmser. The Army of the Moselle had 36,000 men, of no better quality,[1] to resist Brunswick's well-disciplined army, which numbered 4,000 more. There was as little to be done with the new recruits of the general levy in this quarter as in Flanders; the Committee, therefore, ordered them to be sent into the fortresses, the garrisons of which were drafted off as much as possible to the armies. Then, at the end of October, they decreed that 15,000 men should be sent from the Army of the north and the Ardennes Army to the Palatinate, the danger on the Belgian frontier appearing to be removed for a long time to come. The appointment of an able commander-in-chief was equally necessary for both armies. The Moselle army had had two commanders since Houchard, who rivalled one another in impotence and worthlessness. Landremont, Beauharnais' successor on the Rhine, had been dismissed on account of his noble birth, at the time of Houchard's fall,

[1] Accerding to the lists in the war ministry. Gouvion St. Cyr gives here, and in the following cases, a different list, of which I need take the less notice because they contradict one other Conf. e. g. N. 17 and 18.

and no one could be induced to take the command, through fear of a similar fate; so that, at last, the conventional commissioners gave the appointment to Carlin, a dragoon captain, only because he was willing to accept it. We have already seen how incapable he was; his incapacity was again shown in the battle at the lines of Weissenburg, where he was simply unable to give any other command than one for a hasty retreat. Under such leaders anarchy quickly spread through all ranks. On one occasion a general of division rode over to Strasburg to get instructions from the Jacobin club in that city; on another, the general, in the midst of the enemy's fire, ordered his war commissioner, on pain of severe punishment, to take the command of the troops; whereupon the latter made off in all haste. Here, as every where else, the lawless terrorism of the Committee of Public Safety produced, not strength and unity, but fear and dissolution.

Matters assumed a different aspect when, at the end of October, General Pichegru became commander of the Rhine Army, and, at the beginning of November, General Hoche was appointed chief of the Army of the Moselle.

Pichegru had been a non-commissioned officer in the artillery, before the Revolution, and was, consequently, like all his comrades since 1789, a thorough revolutionist. He was for a long time president of the Jacobin club in Besançon, and as such was chosen commander by a battalion of volunteers. In this capacity he entered the Strasburg garrison, where, in the absence of warlike employment, he continued to play a part in the Jacobin club, and by that means rapidly rose to the rank of brigadier-general and chief of division, without ever having been under fire. He was at that time in the prime of life, always master of himself, cold and impenetrable. By a well-sustained taciturnity he contrived to suggest the idea of superior depth of mind; and he influenced the mass of the half soldiers of that time all the more easily, because, being never diverted from his

object by amusements, he had really acquired some valuable knowledge in various branches of military science. But he had never been in battle, had never had the conduct of great affairs, and it still remained to be seen to what degree he possessed the eye and the genius of a general. It was enough for the Committee of Public Safety that St. Just, who was at that time in Strasburg, recommended him as a man of strong character and a thorough republican. He was appointed at once, and St. Just, at the knitting of whose eyebrows all the rest of Strasburg trembled, condescended to overcome the last scruples of the new commander-in-chief by encouraging words. Pichegru entered upon his office, loudly declaring that the Rhine Army should once more assume the offensive, and not lay down its arms until Landau was relieved, and the French soil cleared of every enemy.

Lazarus Hoche, the new general of the Moselle Army, was a man of an entirely different stamp, different party views, and a different future. He was the son of an old *invalide*, was reared in poverty and misery by his aunt, an old greengrocer, and became a groom when a mere boy, that he might not remain a burden on his protectress. He was induced to leave this service by reading Rousseau's writings, which opened to him, as to so many of his contemporaries, the prospect of a boundless future. He was about to enter a regiment destined for the East Indies, when he fell into the hands of the recruiting officers of the French guards, and thus came at sixteen years of age into the barracks of Versailles. Strong and stately in person, and full of zeal and courage, he would have been the pattern of a soldier, if his violent temper and unruly pride had not incessantly involved him in quarrels and vexation. He was perpetually under arrest, and with difficulty kept down his wrath against his superiors; he saw before him a life of endless slavery without hope or prospect of any kind. But the spirit which dwelt in him sustained him: his thirst for

knowledge, his ambition, and the presentiment of his future greatness, urged him on. In his leisure hours he carried water and worked as a gardener's assistant; at night he knitted wollen caps, and embroidered waistcoats, until he had at last earned a sum of money sufficient to buy the books on mathematics and military history, for the contents of which his soul thirsted. In this state of mind the Revolution found him, and we may imagine with what delight he threw himself into its vortex. He joined in the attack on the Bastille, raved for Lafayette, and became acquainted with Danton and Legendre. For a time he gained but little personal advantage from the movement; he became a non-commissioned officer, and held this post till the summer of 1792, when Servan observed the superior bearing of his file, and made him a lieutenant on the spot. He then distinguished himself at the siege of Thionville, was made captain, served as adjutant of General Leveneur in the Belgian campaign, and after the battle of Neerwinden was privately sent by the latter to Paris, to warn the government against Dumouriez' dangerous intrigues. Hoche discharged this delicate commission with devoted zeal; made the acquaintance of Pache and Marat, and thereby formed relations with the faction of the Hôtel de Ville, with Bouchotte, Vincent, and Audouin, which suddenly transported him into the most influential circles of the great political world—to the very source of decrees, by which the fate of Europe was decided. He entered upon this new position with the confidence and ardour of genuine talent; from the very first moment it seemed as if he, the son of the *invalide*, the stable-groom, had never done any thing else but lead armies and rule over nations. He still spoke the language of his patrons, cursed like the *père Duchesne*, swore to exterminate the traitors, the rich, and the tyrants; but in the midst of all this passion mighty thoughts were germinating in him, which in their development quickly cast off these rude forms.

On returning to the Belgian army, he could not conceive how any one could make war in such a wretched manner; all that was grand, correct and decisive, lay in all directions clearly before his eyes, and ready for his grasp; and with impatient urgency, and a full consciousness of his own superiority, he besieged the Committee of Public Safety with warnings and advice. "Cease," he wrote at the end of August, "to divide our forces; collect an overpowering mass and seize victory by a bold advance. We are waging a war of mere imitation, a war of puppets; we follow the enemy wherever they shew themselves; we go to the point to which they lead us, without any plans or ideas of our own. Cannot we consider what *we* ought to do, without first thinking of *their* movements?" When Carnot read the memoir prefaced by the above words, he cried: "This officer will make his way." Whereupon Robespierre took up the document, read it through with attention, and then said: "This is a highly dangerous man."[1] There the matter rested. Meanwhile Hoche distinguished himself so greatly by his restless energy in the defence of Dunkirk, that he was immediately afterwards appointed brigadier-general, and after a short interval, general of division. In this position he renewed his proposals to the Committee for the conquest of Belgium, repeating, in the main, the plans of Barthelemy, urging them to collect large forces, and unhesitatingly to give up all subordinate positions. "What matters," said he, "the destruction of a nest, when the decision of a campaign, and the welfare of the country, are at stake?" He once more spoke to the winds, for we have already seen what

[1] This story is related by Carnot in the Memoire against Bailleul and the 18th of Fructidor. The fact of his calling the author of the memoir, four years after the event, a *sergeant "qui fera son chemin"* when Hoche had long become an officer, cannot invalidate the credibility of the anecdote.

sort of instructions were sent to Jourdan instead of these, at the end of October.

About this time, a peremptory and immediate necessity arose of appointing a vigorous commander over the Moselle army. Audouin remembered his friend, and proposed him to Bouchotte; Carnot had no objection to make, and the Committee confirmed the appointment. Hoche carried with him to his new scene of action directions to relieve Landau at any cost; but on his arrival he found the task almost hopeless. The army was weak dispirited and disorderly; he declared to Bouchotte that he could do nothing, that whatever was done must be done by the Rhine Army; and for this purpose he sent off a division of his forces to reinforce Pichegru. But the aspect of affairs in that quarter was not much more promising; the news from Landau became every day more alarming, and new and urgent orders arrived from Paris. For a time, therefore, there was helplessness in both camps, and Pichegru was obliged in his turn to send off some battalions to the Army of the Moselle. At last Hoche, at the repeated instigation of Bouchotte, resolved to attack the Prussians in full force. But Brunswick, who had already resolved to take up his winter-quarters, retreated slowly until he had concentrated about 15,000 men in the strong position of Kaiserslautern, where he repulsed all the attacks of the twofold superior enemy, with terrible bloodshed. Some attempts to storm Wurmser's intrenchments at Hagenau, which were made at the same time by Pichegru, had no better result; this first attempt failed completely.

But Hoche now threw off all consideration for the wishes and instructions of the capital. His confidence was not in the least diminished by the late events, and he wrote to Paris, proposing to lead two-thirds of his own troops, and the reinforcements which might meanwhile be expected from the Ardennes, over to the Rhine Army, and then, to break through the enemy at this point with irresistible

force.[1] The influence of his friends induced the Committee to pardon his first failure, and to sanction the new proposal. General Japonier, therefore, first marched down the Lauter to the Rhine, on the 4th of December, with 12,000 men; three other divisions of equal strength followed a week later, and their arrival immediately brought the matter to a decision.

Pichegru, meanwhile, had kept the Austrians, who were posted between the Rhine and the mountains, perpetually on the alert. Without making any great progress, he inflicted constant losses on the enemy, wearied them out by endless alarms and exhausting efforts, and thus prepared them for the last annihilating blow. Wurmser, who saw his own divisions hourly melting away, and those of the French continually increasing, urgently begged the Duke of Brunswick for assistance. The latter only replied by calling upon him to bring the Austrian army nearer to the Prussian quarters by a retrograde movement, and day after day was lost in these negotiations. Brunswick was not wrong when he criticized the position of his colleague at Hagenau; but the real point was that, in accordance with the wishes of his court, he did not choose to engage in any great aggressive operations.[2] He did, however, hurry up in person with a few battalions, in order to help in some measure to secure the important positions in the hills near Lemberg.

But it was already too late. On the 22nd Hoche arrived at the head-quarters of the Rhine army, and held a brief and hasty consultation with Pichegru and the representatives

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[1] Such is the statement of Soult, who was at that time on Hoche's staff, and consequently in a position to know the facts. The testimony of St. Cyr, who was at this time adjutant of a brigade in the army of the Rhine, and who names Carnot as the author of the plan, can have no weight against this evidence. —

[2] Wagener says, page 196, that he did not seem to know of Hoche's march; but the duke's despatch of the 21st of September proves the contrary. (*Feldzug von* 1793, p. 230.)

of the people. St. Just, who did not usually trouble himself about military details, appeared on this occasion to have no great confidence in the young general; and called upon him to communicate his plan to the popular representatives. But Hoche shewed as little respect of persons now as usual; without a thought of the danger which he ran in offending this dreaded representative, he declared that secrecy was indispensable to success, and pledged his head for the result. Lacoste and Baudot, the commissioners attached to the Moselle army, supported him, and St. Just, with proud silence, allowed him to have his way. Early on the following morning he began to move against the right wing of the Austrians. Their line ran from Drusenheim on the Rhine in a north westerly direction, past Hagenau, to the mountains; and continued from Reishofen almost due north, through Freschweiler, along the crest of the nearest chain of hills, to Werdt and Lembach, where it was joined by the Prussian troops under Brunswick on the steep summit of the Scheerhöhle. Hoche perceived that these mountain posts formed the key of the enemy's position, since, after their capture, the left wing of the Austrians, and their centre, which projected towards the south, might be taken in the rear and crushed between two fires. He therefore made his principal attack upon Werdt and Freschweiler. General Hotze, who commanded at these points, offered a brave resistance for a time, but was then completely routed, and the French took the villages by storm. Wurmser was only rescued by the circumstance that Lembach and the Scheerhöhle were held during the whole of the day, so that he gained time to retreat across the Sur, and take up a new position close before Weissenburg, between the Rhine and the Geisberg. His troops were in great disorder, weakened by one-third, and encumbered with 18,000 sick and wounded: an immediate pursuit on the part of the French would have obliged him to continue his retreat

without further fighting. But internal discord on the enemy's side once more gave him a short breathing time.

It was not without jealousy that Pichegru saw his young colleague make his appearance, on his own scene of action, with so much ardour and success. He threw no obstacles in his way, but he did little to support him: while he was with the conventional commissioners at Hagenau, it came out that, in the engagement of the 24th, the divisions of the Rhine army had exhausted their ammunition, and had received no orders from Pichegru for their further movements. Hoche hastily furnished all the powder and cartridges which his troops could possibly spare, and sent a most urgent summons to Pichegru. But the latter declared that he did not know where his divisions were, spoke of the dissatisfaction of his troops at the presumption of the Moselle army, and finally demanded the dismissal of General Lefevre, who, he said, had insulted him by unbecoming importunity. Hoche did not hesitate a moment. He wrote, on the 24th, to the commissioners, that it was high time to do away with the jealousy between the two armies, of which Pichegru had spoken; and he therefore called upon them to appoint General Pichegru commander-in-chief of both armies, by an authoritative despatch. This letter led to a lively discussion at Hagenau. St. Just was inclined to adopt this measure, and induced his colleagues to prepare the decree; but no sooner had this been done, than Baudot and Lacoste recurred to their resolution, and carried their point on the 25th, (in spite of the decided disinclination of St. Just), that Hoche himself, and not Pichegru, should be entrusted with the chief command of the operations.[1] Pichegru and St. Just were equally offended, but, in the pressure of the moment, did not choose to assume any responsibility. Hoche, on the other hand, probably felt greatly astonished at his

[1] Hoche's despatches to the representatives, of the 4th, 6th, and 18th *Nivose*; to the Committee of Public Safety, of the 19th, and to Privat, of the 23rd *Nivose*. St. Cyr's account is hereby shewn to be entirely incorrect.

unexpected success, but had no anxiety about his own personal safety; he undertook the chief command with the consciousness of the hatred which pursued him, and full of joy at the now certain prospect of victory. On the 26th, he renewed his attack on the imperialists along their whole line, and routed them completely, after a short engagement. The Geisberg, which commanded Wurmser's communications with Weissenburg, was taken by storm, and the French made a rapid advance towards the Lauter. Wurmser seemed utterly lost, but Brunswick, breaking forth at the right moment from his mountain fortress against the hostile columns, once more brought deliverance, and secured his colleague's retreat across the Lauter. Then, however, no further stand was made, and in spite of all the duke's appeals, Wurmser, overpowered with grief and rage, and lost to every hope, hastened back to the right bank of the Rhine; whereupon the Prussian army also was obliged to give up the greatest part of the Palatinate, and to content itself with holding a small district round Mayence.

On the 28th of December, the French troops looked down from the heights near Klingenmünster upon the liberated fortress of Landau. Just as the report of the guns, fired by the garrison in honour of the victory, was thundering in the ears of the conquerors, a courier arrived from Paris with the news that the important city of Toulon, in the distant south, had been wrested from the enemy. The joyful shouts of the troops were redoubled; France stood enveloped by the bright rays of victory on every side, and against every adversary. But a new turn of affairs was approaching for the Revolution. In the preceding year, it had kindled the war to destroy the Constitution; having suceeded in this, it had filled the land with violence, misery and terror. But already the war was bringing men to light who were destined to be its lords and masters; the same December week beheld the mighty triumph of General Hoche, and the first warlike exploit of Napoleon Bonaparte!

CHAPTER III.

OPPRESSION OF THE COUNTRY.

Tyranny of the conventional commissioners in the provinces.—Seizure of all specie.—General disarming of the people.—Arrests in Paris. —Trial of the queen.—Plunder and closing of the churches.—Worship of reason.—Exasperation of the great mass of the people.—Couthon and collot d'herbois in lyons.—Siege of toulon; cartaux and bonaparte.—Treatment of the city by freron and barras.—Rossignol's and lechelle's operations against la vendée. —Campaign on the right bank of the loire.—Carrier in nantes.

By the laws of September, the system which a year before had been tested by the envoys of the Hôtel de Ville, and been carried out since the spring by the conventional commissioners, attained the acknowledged empire over the whole of France. It was now a matter of law that every man should lose his freedom, who was obnoxious to the ruling class; and that every man should forfeit his life, whom that class thought dangerous. It was a legal principle, that the State might take whatever it pleased from all kinds of property; and that there was no protection for private possessions, even against the avarice of individual rulers. A state of things unprecedented in the life of a great nation now commenced. Despotism, which acknowledges no rights in subjects as against itself, is found elsewhere; it is found in the ancient oriental empires, and in modern Europe; and where its duration has been short, it has sometimes led to order, unity and grand results. But in this case, it was well known who was oppressed, but not, who was the oppressor. A lawless mob, excited by changing passions, and led by wrangling demagogues, was now the despot of the

French people: an organised anarchy was established in unlimited power—a contradiction in itself, which, wherever it prevailed, could produce nothing but death and destruction. Let us first see in what manner the laws of the 5th and 7th of September were carried out in the country.

The form of proceeding is, in general, already known to us. The conventional commissioner who was present "on mission" formed the centre of revolutionary action in each Department. In the principal towns of the district he administered affairs in person, and sent patriots, possessed of local knowledge, into the smaller towns and villages, with unlimited powers of arresting and confiscating. The first measure was always the assembling or forming of a Jacobin club, which, consisting exclusively of proletaries, had the task of instructing the lower class of people in the advantages accrueing to them from the new system; and rousing their enthusiasm by the prospect of luxury and power. The next step, generally, was to fill the revolutionary committees with thorough-paced democrats, who, on their part, unhesitatingly effected the arrest of all the *suspects* who were still at large. Meanwhile the conventional commissioner went through the lists of communal and district officers, decreed the dismissal of those whom he regarded as respectable people, rich egoists, or religious fanatics, and then called upon the clubs to propose suitable Sansculottes to take their places. The requisitions continued, meanwhile, their unchecked course. At first the commissioners adhered to the instructions of the law, which ordained the procuring of such materials only as were necessary for the equipment and maintenance of the armies. But as there are very few things which may not be, some how or other, employed in a great war, they extended their demands to every imaginable kind of property, and soon dropped even this last pretext, and took, without compunction, whatever their hearts desired. According to St. Just's principle, that the Republic ruled the land by right of conquest, they levied

contributions under the name of revolutionary taxes, the distribution of which, among the individual citizens, was likewise regulated by the local committees, according to political views and personal favour. If the population of any place appeared inclined to resist such accumulated ill treatment, they forthwith hastened to form a revolutionary army on the Parisian model, and to appoint a revolutionary tribunal for the curtailment of judicial proceedings; so that, in six months, there were few towns in France without a scaffold and a garrison of this kind.

In order to render the details of this system clearer to the reader, we will follow a few of the commissioners in the exercise of their functions, and form a picture of their operations from their own reports.[1] André Dumont entered the Departments of Picardy, fully possessed by the feeling that he had to metamorphose the people, to turn all existing institutions up-side down, and to annihilate all their supporters. "Every day," he wrote, on the 4th of October, "I discover new treasures — money and assignats, silver spoons and coffee-pots — all of them fair booty, because they belong to aristocrats or *Emigrés*. I cause all priests to be arrested who indulge themselves in celebrating the Sunday; I found in a barn three black animals concealed, whom they call monks, and immediately seized them." On the 28th, he reported from Beauvais that the peasants had refused to give up their corn for the supply of Paris; whereupon, he says, a division of the revolutionary army of Paris made short work of them; and he himself immediately deposed the town-council and arrested all the malcontents. He forwarded a number of chests to the Convention filled with plundered treasures, and

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[1] Where, in the following account, no particular authority is cited, our statements are drawn from the despatches of the commissioners themselves in the Moniteur.

declared, on the 3rd of November, that he had sent 400 images of saints from the north-western Departments to the mint, and that, in the Somme Department, he had left neither lead, copper, nor silver, in a single church. The representatives Isoré and Duquesnoi, who were established at Lille, conducted affairs in nearly the same way in Flanders. They roused the club of Lille from its slumbers, as they expressed it, received from it information against all the *accapareurs*, the rich, and the aristocrats, living in the city, deposed the town-council, and raised a revolutionary army of 1,000 men from the proletaries of the place. "Everything belongs to the people and nothing to the individual," was Isoré's motto on this occasion.[1] A division of the army then marched to Douai, where, in a single day, fifty persons were arrested, and all the authorities changed. They proceeded thence to Dunkirk, where Isoré caused a number of persons to be transported, without ceremony, as usurers, confiscated their property, and appointed a revolutionary tribunal to prosecute all obnoxious persons. Here, too, the priests were incarcerated and all the churches closed.[2] The conventional commissioner, Ruhl, treated Champagne in the same manner; and when in Rheims, he broke, amongst other holy vessels, the oil flask of St. Remy, and sent the fragments of it to the Convention.[3] In Lorraine, Lacoste and Mallarmé, attached as commissioners to the army of the Moselle, were employed in the collection of revolutionary taxes. They first induced the club of Metz to procure "the means of expelling the enemy;" the club then sent a deputation to the popular unions of Nancy, Luneville and Pont-a-Mousson, and each of the latter sent men of trust to accompany the envoys, so that the mass of the voluntary

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[1] Isoré to Bouchotte, November 4th (vid. Legros). — [2] Dufresse, general of the revolutionary army, to Bouchotte, December 6th (vid. Legros). — [3] Which, of course, did not prevent its being used subsequently at the coronation of Charles X.!

taxgatherers increased at every step. They extended their excursions to Befort in Alsace, where the revolutionary committee, at their suggestion, laid a tax of 135,000 francs on twenty-five persons, putting down one as an aristocrat at 3,500 fr., and another as an egoist at 7,000 fr., six poor artisans as fanatics at 3 fr. each and a "moderate" *rentier* at 1,000 fr. &c.[1] The plundered persons vainly sought aid from Herault de Sechelles, who had been named commissioner for Southern Alsace: Herault, himself a member of the Committee of Public Safety, held the same views as Lacoste, and sent word to Paris, in November, that he had everywhere chastised usury and fanaticism, purified the clubs, deposed the authorities, and entrusted all offices to the Sansculottes. "A deputy of the people," he wrote at this time to his worthy colleague Carrier, "must always order the great measures, but leave the execution of them to inferior agents, and never compromise himself by written instructions."

Still harder, at the same period, was the fate of Strasburg and Lower Alsace.[2] In the beginning of October, the representatives Guyardin and Millaud had carried out a preliminary purification of the public authorities, named a police committee for the whole Department, and decreed, on the 15th, the formation of a revolutionary army and a revolutionary tribunal. The latter consisted of a malicious old canon named Taffin, a servile "candidate of theology," and an uneducated gilder. The public informer was Eulogius Schneider, a vagabond German clergyman, formerly professor at Bonn, who began his office by heavily fining a number of pedlars and huxtresses for exceeding the *maximum*. But the terrorism was not developed to its full extent, until

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[1] From the papers of the Committee of Public Safety. — [2] The following is taken chiefly from Strobel's *Geschichte des Elsasses*, which is based throughout upon public documents and authentic reports.

the end of the month, when St. Just and Lebas came to Strasburg as Plenipotentiaries Extraordinary of the Committee of Public Safety. At their first meeting St. Just roughly accosted Schneider; "what is the use of all this punctiliousness? Don't you know the crimes of the aristocrats better than that? In the four-and-twenty hours which you waste in inquiry, you ought to procure as many convictions." He brought more than sixty Jacobins with him from the interior, who received 15 francs a day and a free maintenance, as apostles of enlightenment and the French language; these men soon quarrelled with Schneider, and made violent war against all priests and churches. Schneider was all the more zealous in his endeavour to secure the favour of St. Just by unbounded severity; he sentenced the brewers of the city to a fine of 250,000 fr. for avarice; the bakers were fined 300,000 fr. as enemies of mankind; one grocer, to a fine of 100,000 fr. for violating the law of the *maximum*, and an apothecary to 15,000 fr. for asking too much for his rhubarb; and a long series of similar penalties followed during the next two months. St. Just himself levied a compulsory loan of 4,000,000 fr. on the rich inhabitants of the city; and another of 9,000,000 fr., eight days afterwards, on the Department of the Lower Rhine; and a third of 4,000,000 fr., at the end of November, on the peasants of Alsace, because they would only hear mass from their orthodox priests.[1] In addition to this came requisitions of shoes, beds, and all the cloaks existing in the city. The churches and synagogues were closed, the holy vessels confiscated, and the statues on the minster dashed to pieces, by the express and repeated orders of St. Just. At the incessant instigation of the representative the prisons were soon filled: at the end of 1793 more than 2,000 persons had been arrested in Strasburg—peasants, artisans, and educated men, promiscuously—and were well

[1] Convention nationale 4th, 15th, 21st of November.

or ill-treated according as they paid larger or smaller sums to Schneider for their maintenance. The consequence was, that, in December, Schneider himself was arrested by St. Just's command, and sent to Paris; after which, Monet the mayor, an associate of St. Just, exercised a juster, — i. e. an impartially unsparing tyranny. The guillotine was in constant activity;[1] "All the aristocrats," wrote St. Just to Robespierre, "of the municipality, the courts of law, and the regiments, have been put to death."[2] "The property of the condemned fanatics," wrote Milhaud on the 23. November, "will bring 15,000,000 fr. to the Republic." "Good people," said Monet to the people of Strasburg, at this time, in a manifesto, "rise and bless your fate! Let the mercantile spirit disappear from among you; let the tears of the rich egoists be a spring of joy to the Sansculottes. The end of your long privations is approaching, and the Republic is securing an inheritance for you in the superfluities of the unfeeling rich."

If we now turn to the south of France, we see every where the same spectacle. In the Jura the conventional commissioners Bassal and Lamarque made a requisition of 1,200 beds and bedding, sheets to the amount of 5,000 francs, and blankets to the amount of 419,000 francs; and they declared, some weeks later, that all the gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, wood, leather, soap, corn, wine, spirits, and vinegar, horses, cattle, forage, and clothing materials, which existed in the Department, stood at the disposal of the Republic.[3]

[1] Gatteau to Daubigny, 27 Brumaire II. (*Papiers de Robespierre* II. 248); "It was high time that St. Just should arrive and deal blows with the axe at the fanaticism, sloth, and German stupidity, of the Alsatians, and the selfishness and avarice of the rich. *Sainte Guillotine est dans la plus brillante activité! Quel maitre bougre que ce garçon-là!*" — [2] Robespierre in the Jacobin club, November 21st. Nevertheless Buchez, full of admiration for St. Just, writes: "Alsace was regenerated without shedding one drop of blood;" and Louis Blanc faithfully repeats this, as well as a number of other similar truths. — [3] Sommier, *Revolution dans le Jura*, p. 267, 355, and elsewhere.

Puy-du-Dome was cleansed, and its patriotism reanimated, by Robespierre's friend, Couthon. As early as September, before he had betaken himself to Lyons, he deposed the officials, entrusted power to the clubs, formed revolutionary committees and revolutionary tribunals; then followed revolutionary taxes and requisitions of every kind,[1] and, at the beginning of November, a thorough clearing out of all the churches; so that he himself could report the value of the booty to the Convention as amounting to several millions.[2] The booty of Marseilles was likewise reckoned by millions;[3] the number of voluntary or forced emigrants from that city rose to 12,000, among whom were the richest merchants and manufacturers; and their whole property fell by law under confiscation. Laplanche reported from Bourges, in October,[4] to the Jacobins; "I have every where made terror the order of the day, deposed the Federalists, incarcerated the *suspects*, and executed the royalists; Orleans has produced 50,000 francs, and Bourges 2,000,000, within two days. Baudot and Chaudron gathered a no less plentiful harvest in Toulouse, where they kept 1,500 persons, among whom were all the officials of the Department, in custody, and induced the club to issue an order for changing all gold and silver money into *assignats*.[5] In the Department of Aveyron, the leader of the revolutionary army boasted that he had captured an infinite quantity of gold and silver;[6] while in Bayonne all the muslin and lace was laid under requisition, to make, as was said, *trowsers* for the troops.[7] Bordeaux was treated by Tallien and Ysabeau with especial severity, in consequence of the part it had played in the

[1] Barante, Convention 3, 325. — [2] Convention nationale 4th December. — [3] Gasparin, September 4th 1793 (Moniteur 7th October 1794); "The 4 millions demanded by us will be paid to-morrow; and besides this we have made a requisition of all the uniforms in the city." — [4] 24 Vendémiaire. — [5] Convention nationale, November 14. The Convention subsequently annulled this order. — [6] Convention nationale, November 10. — [7] Convention nationale, 21. Messidor III.

Girondist revolt. After carefully disarming the inhabitants, the commissioners formed a revolutionary army, arrested all the leaders of the previous movement, all the officials and richer merchants — in all more than 15,000 men — and kept the guillotine in incessant activity. Tallien, who, in the midst of this bloodshed, led a life of ostentations gluttony, placed the church plate at the disposal of the theatres, and extorted enormous sums as revolutionary contributions—e. g. more than two millions from three merchants.[1] Fouché, the friend of Hebert and Collot d'Herbois, went on in a still worse manner in the Departments Niévre and Allier, where he first equipped a revolutionary army, then deposed and arrested a vast number of officials, and, lastly, ordered that all the coined money, and all the valuables, with the exception of female ornaments, throughout the whole province, should be delivered up, on pain of the severest punishment. At the same time he directed his wrath against the Church; caused images of Slumber to be substituted for the crosses in the churchyards; incarcerated the priests without distinction, and, during the month of November, sent large masses of church plate to Paris of the value of several millions. The Convention clapped their hands in applause at reports which were accompanied by such weighty confirmation: the calling in of all the coined money, however, was suspended, as a government measure;[2] but to make up for it, a law was issued, that all concealed articles of value should be subject to confiscation.[3] As no one could possibly expose his ready money to the public, the commissioners had in this decree an official right to declare every locked money chest fair booty, and they made the most comprehensive use of the powers thus given. The very mildest proceeding was to force the possessors to change their money for *assignats*, and this was done — e. g. by the younger Robes-

[1] Cambon's report of December 13th 1794. — [2] November 25th. — [3] November 13th.

pierre in Provence,[1] by Lacoste and Baudot in Alsace, who, in this way, scraped together more than twenty millions in the Departments of the Rhine, in the first months of 1794. The terror inspired was so great, that in these parts, as well as in Nevers and Moulins, the citizens delivered up their dangerous wealth without waiting for a summons. Competent authorities have formed an estimate, that within six months these acts of extortions brought 300 or 400 millions of coined money into the treasury, while the number of persons arrested throughout France was more than 200,000. No one dared to think of resistance, and no other instinct seemed to prevail in the population than that of self-preservation, to be sought by submission and retirement. Yet the Government always had a just consciousness of the universal hatred which was kept down by this intimidation, and therefore sought additional material security in the decree of the 15th of December, which, under pretext of warlike preparations, ordered that all arms should be delivered up on pain of severe punishment. This measure was carried out with such care and severity, that, two months later, the Government could feel certain that from the Meuse to the Pyrenees, not a gun was to be found in the cities and villages.[2] If, therefore, the elements of an insurrection had existed at that period, the means of carrying it into effect would still have been wanting.[3]

We need hardly remark that Paris set a fearful example to the provinces in the path of this bloody tyranny. Its revolutionary army surpassed all the banditti of the Depart-

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[1] Vid. His despatches in Buchez, 35, 426. — [2] Such was the report of Mallet-du-Pan at that time, after accurate enquiries by the English government. In Paris, however, the Committee of Public Safety considered it necessary to increase the severity of the order, on the 23rd of July 1794; the weapons delivered up at that time were restored to the citizens by a decree of the Convention, passed on the 17th of November. — [3] Mallet, Mémoirs II, 8, 19.

ments, in worthlessness and crime. More than once, complaints had reached the Convention that Ronsin's myrmidons had plundered the villages, extorted money and other valuables from the peasants by ill-treatment of every kind, and had held the feet of a farmer close to the fire on his hearth, until he gave up the key of his money-chest. In the city the number of imprisoned persons quickly rose to 5,000. They all received a uniformly meagre diet, at the common cost; and were only allowed to communicate with their relations in writing. The revolutionary tribunal was in regular and ever-increasing activity. On the 14th of October, after an imprisonment of eight weeks in the Conciergerie, exposed to ill usage of every kind, the Queen was brought before the court. She appeared in a ragged dress, with grey hair, but with such a quiet dignity and resignation, that even the audience of this tribunal could not withhold its respect and compassion. This feeling reached its height when Hebert came forward as a witness for the prosecution. He had tortured her son, now eight years of age, and her daughter, now twelve, by inquiring whether the Queen had not lived in unchaste connexion with the former. He had succeeded in extorting a signature from the miserable boy — whom the cobbler Simon alternately beat and intoxicated — to a statement containing this foul lie. And, that the whole party might be branded with the infamy of these proceedings, the Municipality expressly approved of his efforts, and the Jacobin club applauded his report. He now came to the tribunal to befoul the Queen, before her execution, with the charge of indulging in unnatural lust. At first she remained silent, but when called upon to answer, she crushed him with the half-choked words; "A mother can make no answer to such questions; I appeal to every mother here present." A deep murmur ran through the court, and the judges did not venture to put any further questions. When Robespierre heard it he cried out: "Miserable fool, he will make our

enemies objects of compassion." The final sentence was a matter of course, and on the 16th of October the head of the Queen fell upon the scaffold. She was followed, fourteen days afterwards, by the imprisoned Girondists, Vergniaud, Brissot, and eighteen others: they lost all composure during the discussion, and mutually endeavoured to throw upon one another the guilt of crimes which had once formed the pride of their policy; it was not until they found themselves on the road to the scaffold that they recovered their proud and steady intrepidity. The tedious proceedings of this trial gave the tribunal an opportunity for begging the Convention to curtail the legal formalities; whereupon Robespierre carried a decree, that after three days' discussion the jury might put a stop to further proceedings, by declaring that their opinion was made up. The political objects of this institution became more and more visible, through the hypocritical veil of avenging justice. By the end of the year the court had sent a hundred and twenty persons to the scaffold. Among these was Madame Roland, who, after the fall of her party, had given up all care for her own personal safety — for her own ambition, happiness and safety; and when her associates fled, she remained with quiet heroism in Paris, awaiting her fate. In the midst of the political catastrophe, her heart, which had hitherto only warmed for politics, had conceived a deep affection for Buzot, one of her party friends, who was now being hunted to death as a *proscrit* in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux. Her only feeling now, was that the prison and the scaffold would bring her deliverance and blessed repose; and she went, not only with courageous composure, but with beaming joy, to her death.[1] Then came Philip of Orleans, who, with a penitent and broken heart, loudly accused himself of his crimes against King Louis;[2] then the aged Bailly, who

[1] Douban, *Étude sur Madame Roland*, Paris 1864. — [2] Letter of his confessor in Nettement, *Girondins*, 172.

was delivered over for hours to the brutality of a revengeful mob, but whose cheerful calmness no torments could disturb; then Manuel, Barnave, and a long series of deposed generals.[1]

At the sight of these triumphs the Municipality was filled with a consciousness of its irresistible power. It was, after all, *their* wishes and *their* views according to which France had been convulsed and plundered in every direction. They had struck the note, which the conventional commissioners caused to re-echo from north and south; they had scarcely any anxiety left, but the fear of being outstripped by any of their pupils in the paths of destruction. They were especially excited by what Dumont and Fouché were doing against the old opponent of Revolution—the Church. Religious hatred and lust of booty here cooperated, and in November the entire destruction of the Church became the favourite theme of municipal discussion. In the first place, Chaumette forbade all divine service outside the churches; he then induced a few priests publicly to abandon their profession; and lastly, on the 7th of November, Gobel, bishop of Paris, appeared in the Convention with a great train of constitutional clergy, who, having been introduced by the Municipality, solemnly renounced their old superstition in the face of the nation. The Mountain expressed its approbation by vigorous clapping of hands; those of the deputies who held any ecclesiatical dignity followed the example, and Chaumette begged that the Convention would consecrate one day of the republican calendar to Reason, as the only true god. The agitation was then extended to the Sections, which one after another closed their churches, and carried of the silver vessels, the embroidered vestments, and the valuable receptacles of relics, either to the Convention or to the Hôtel de Ville. On the 10th, the cathedral of Notre-Dame was consecrated by a half-intoxicated band of Sansculottes, in the presence

[1] For particulars Conf. the excellent essay "The revolutionary Tribunals," by Wilson Cooker.

of the Convention and the Municipality, to the goddess of Reason; the representative of the latter—a complaisant beauty of the ballet—sat upon the high altar in a dress of transparent *crepe*, while her companions danced the *carmagnole* around her. These scenes of riot were repeated every day, and were zealously imitated, as we have seen, by the representatives in the provinces. The citizens were enraged, but looked on at this, as at other atrocities, in silence; only the women thronged by thousands, with angry intrepidity, into the few churches which the rulers had still left open for Christian worship. The Hôtel de Ville spoke of them as wanton huzzies, who wished to do penance for their sins; but, secure of victory in all other quarters, they allowed them to have their way.

Such was the administration which the September rule imposed upon France as its regular and habitual government. Such was its course in all those parts of the country, which had bowed to the yoke with patient submission, and had not roused any special wrath on the part of the conquerors by active resistance. It is true that the rulers were not without grounds for despotic suspicion even in these quarters. However thoroughly the freedom of speech, and of the press, was stifled—however timidly every man concealed his excitement in the interior of his house, and his feelings in the depths of his bosom—the tyrants were still made to feel the general abhorrence by the death-like stillness, and the icy coldness, with which the masses of the people kept themselves aloof from their dealings. The commissioners, without any exception, reported from the provinces, that the people was well disposed but misled, that on their arrival it had no idea of its own rights, and that the aristocrats and egoists had possessed complete influence over it. In Paris itself the Jacobins were continually reminded of the indignation with which the country endured the yoke of a minority, which was only strong through crime. We still meet, in November, with some

émeutes in single Sections, which ended, indeed, in the victory of the patriots, but were rightly understood by the Convention and the Commune as a threatening proof of the enmity of public opinion. In a word the Jacobins throughout the whole land felt themselves alone, condemned to destroy with ever-increasing fury, if they would themselves escape destruction.

The horrors which may arise from such an alternative were witnessed, more especially, in those parts of the empire which defended their existence against the republicans, with arms in their hands. After an heroic resistance, the city of Lyons, bombarded by Dubois-Crancé's batteries, and starved out by Couthon's bands of peasants, surrendered at discretion, on the 9th of October.[1] At the same moment a violent quarrel arose between the two representatives, which was only ended by the recall, nay, the arrest of Dubois by order of the Committee of Public Safety. On the city, however, the Convention, at the instigation of the Committee, passed sentence of utter destruction: it was to be rased to the ground, with the exception of the manufactories, schools and hospitals; the property of the rich was to be divided among the patriots, and the insurgent population punished according to martial law. Couthon, who was appointed to preside over the execution of the sentence, had hitherto been inferior to no one in bloodthirsty party hatred; but in him fanaticism had not entirely destroyed political insight, or, perhaps we should say, human understanding, and he too was now struck by the insanity of such a thirst for vengeance. He saw the suicidal madness of annihilating this splendid city—an ornament to France and a source of existence to hundreds of thousands—and that, too, after its submission. He saw that the whole population, proprietors and workmen without distinction, hated the Convention, but that, ex-

[1] An exact account of the proceedings is given in a report of Merlin de Thionville to the Convention October 23rd 1794.

hausted as they were, they might still be calmed down by severity against the leaders and suitable treatment of the masses. Moreover, even if he had wished to proceed further he would not have had the means. For half the peasants of the *levée en masse* had run away before the capture of the city, and the other half, after that event; a portion of the troops had begun their march towards Toulon immediately after the capitulation; and the rest resolutely refused to play the part of executioners in a general massacre of unarmed adversaries. For all these reasons Couthon took upon himself, not directly to alter the decree of the Convention, but at any rate to retard it by a slow execution. On the 14th of October, he had appointed a court-martial for those who were taken in arms, which, in six weeks, condemned about a hundred persons to be shot, and consequently, according to our usual notions, had voluntary done enough to clear Couthon from all suspicion of a too soft-hearted humanity.[1] He then formed two *soi-disant* "commissions of popular justice," which, however, he bound so closely by the customary forms of trial, that they had not succeeded in passing a single sentence at the end of the month. The demolition of the houses was delayed from day to day, and (which embittered the club-men of Lyons and Paris most of all) Couthon strictly forbade the plundering of aristocratic houses by individual patriots. Such conduct excited the greatest displeasure in the capital. When some one remarked, in the Parisian Municipality, that the entire destruction of Lyons would deal a deadly blow at French commerce in general,

[1] He writes on the 20th October to Robespierre (*papiers de Robespierre* I, 362): "Procure me, I pray, a resolution of the Committee of Public Safety ordering me to Toulon. If I reach that place, and hell does not intervene, the same system of open violence shall prevail in Toulon, which has reigned in Lyons. As soon as Toulon has been burned — for this vile city must altogether disappear from the soil of liberty — as soon as Toulon has been burned I will come back to you again."

Hebert replied, that trade and the arts were the born enemies of freedom, and that it was, moreover, in the interest of Paris not to allow so considerable a city as Lyons to exist beside it on the French soil.[1] His partisans quite agreed with his reasoning, that if, according to Couthon's report, the whole population of Lyons was unpatriotic, it must be exterminated without distinction. Couthon, being informed of their views, himself begged to be recalled, and on the 29th of October, the Committee of Public Safety resolved to send another of its members, Collot d'Herbois, together with Fouché,—who had stood the test so well in Nevers—nineteen picked men of the Parisian club, and three thousand of the revolutionary army, to Lyons, to execute the vengeance of the People. Other revolutionary armies were posted in all the departments bordering on Lyons, and then the work of destruction was begun with ferocious joy. All the administrative bodies in the Department were superseded by provisional commissions in which Collot and Fouché ruled with unlimited powers, and, on the 16th of November, they proclaimed their system to the patriots, in a series of long-winded instructions.[2] "Everything"—it was said in this document—"is allowed to those who act in sympathy with the Revolution; you were oppressed, you must annihilate your oppressors; the Republic will have none but free men upon its soil, and is determined to extirpate all others; thirst for righteous vengeance is your imperative duty; if you are patriots you will recognise your friends, and bring all others to prison, whence they will carry their heads to the scaffold; whoever possesses more than is necessary for his existence, must give it up to pay the cost of the war and the Revolution; all superfluity is a patent and insolent violation of the rights of the People; more especially seize all cloths, shirts and shoes, which may be useful for the

[1] Prudhomme, *Crimes de la Revolution* II, 62. — [2] Published in Guillon de Monléon, *Memoires sur Lyons.*

troops; and above all things, let the so-called precious metals, wherever you find them, pour into the treasury; finally, remember that the republican has no other God but his country, no worship but that of freedom, no morals but those of nature; and use all your power to overthrow every kind of fanaticism for ever."

No one of these propositions was allowed to remain a dead letter. At a festival given in honour of Chalier, a donkey was adorned with a mitre, made to drink out of a consecrated cup, with a cross and a bible tied to his tail. All the churches of the Department were closed, and all the priests put into confinement. The demolition of the houses went on at a great pace, and in a short time 14,000 workmen were engaged in it, and entire streets and squares were levelled with the dust. The executions went on for some days at the usual rate; but no sooner had Ronsin arrived with his banditti, on the 25th of November, than a new revolutionary tribunal was set up for the purpose of discovering the guilty without tedious formalities. Collot then wrote to Robespierre: "there are no innocent persons here, except those who were in prison at the time of the revolt" — and on the 4th of December the executions were carried on *en masse* by volleys of musketry. In seven butcheries of this kind, 484 persons were killed, and simultaneously, during the month of September, 101 persons were guillotined in the city of Lyons; and in the Department, 1,600 according to the lowest, and 6,000 according to the highest, estimate.[1] There could be no question of any in-

[1] The Revolutionary Commission of Lyons wrote to the Parisian Commune (vid. their protocol 22nd Floréal) that they had executed 1,684 guilty persons, acquitted 1,682 innocent ones, and imprisoned 162 *suspects*. On the other hand, Cardillot reported to Robespierre (vid. Robespierre's papers II, 143) that not 1,600 but 6,000 people had been put to death by Collot's orders.

vestigation in these cases; personal and local passions played the principal part in the selection of the victims, and the most shameless robbery went hand in hand with murder. In the city, trade and manufactures were destroyed, the tillage of the land came to a stand-still, and in the spring, the country people could only be compelled to work in their fields, by the threat of being shot. The troops of the line looked on at these excesses of the Parisian gangs with boiling fury; things at last came to such a pass, that for several days regular battles took place between them, and the most alarming reports were sent to Paris on the subject. Collot d'Herbois, however, did not allow himself to be diverted from his purpose, but continued his arrests, robberies and murders, with ever-increasing zeal. He himself lived in oriental ostentation, und conducted himself with brutal *hauteur*. No one obtained an audience from him without asking three times; a long suite of antechambers led to his reception room, in which the petitioner was obliged to remain at fifteen steps from him, and two grenadiers stood at his side with their guns at full cock, and their eyes fixed upon the visitor. His answers were curt and cold, and, in cases of petitions for mercy, generally mingled with cynical derision; when asked for instructions by his tools, he often replied with intentional ambiguity. At table he caroused every day with a crew of buffoons and dissolute women, prepared sentences of death during the meal, and drank to the weal of the Republic, while the thunders of the *mitraillades* resounded from the place of execution.

While these atrocities were overwhelming the second city of the empire, the citizens of Toulon still kept up a resolute resistance. The Allied powers, too, had hastened to strengthen the garrison of this important place; it consisted, in September, of 6,521 Spaniards, 2,421 English, 4,334 Neapolitans, 1,584 Piedmontese and 1,542 national guards of

Toulon—in all, therefore, above 16,000 men;[1]—a force with which, in the weak state of the enemy, an energetic general might have made the most dangerous diversions far into the interior of Provence. But unfortunately the same disadvantages operated here, on a small scale, which, as we have already seen, had such a decisive and fatal effect on the affairs of the great Coalition war. In the city itself two parties stood opposed to one another—the constitutional party of 1789, and the aristocratic and royalist party;—and as ill-luck would have it, each of these gained over one of the Allied powers to their respective sides, and thus involved them in their dissensions. The English protected the constitutionalists, because they formed a majority in the civic magistracies, and consequently were the official representatives of the townsmen; whereupon the Spaniards took, with double warmth, the side of the royalist minority, in which they found their own zeal for the church, and their own views respecting ways and means. From this time violent dissensions arose on every point of the least importance, which crippled all political and military movements. When the royalists, zealously supported by the Spaniards, proposed to recall the clergy, the constitutionalists hesitated; when the former wished to invite the Count of Provence to Toulon, as regent of the kingdom, the latter induced Admiral Hood to oppose their wishes. The Spaniards then brought forward a claim that the Toulon fleet should be given up to their king as a Bourbon; but Hood emphatically refused, on the ground that the capitulation of the city had expressly provided, that the fleet should be

[1] These statements and those which immediately follow are derived from a report of an eye-witness to the king of Prussia. I have given its contents more fully, because the internal history of Toulon during these months has hitherto been utterly unknown, and consequently (e. g. in the otherwise trustworthy history of the Department of Var by Lauvergne) disfigured by the most absurd reports.

given into English custody. From all these disputes, the feud assumed so violent a character that an offensive movement against the Republicans was not to be thought of; it seemed as if none of the Allied generals could venture to march his troops out of the city, from fear of leaving it in the hands of his rivals.[1] And thus the weeks passed away, and the Republic gained irrevocable time to stifle this danger, too, with superior force.

At the beginning of the siege, and during the whole of October and November, the condition of the republican army before Toulon was in the highest degree critical. The conqueror of Marseilles, General Cartaux, of the Army of the Alps, was stationed with 8,000 men on the west side of the city; General Lapoype, with 6,000 men from the Army of Italy was encamped on the eastern side of the roadstead, and was separated from his colleague by a steep chain of hills, on the highest point of which rose the strong fortress of Faron. Lapoype was a soldier by profession, and a violent revolutionist, but he was at the same time a *quondam* Marquis, and a brother-in-law of the Dantonist Fréron — reason enough with the ruling metropolitan party to transfer the chief command to General Cartaux, who, only three years before, had been a painter, and had gradually risen in a battalion of volunteers by his violent club speeches. On the 13th of September, captain Bonaparte arrived in his quarters, a man who, as lieutenant, had distinguished himself by his cool and quick resolution on occasion of the expulsion of the Marseillais from Avignon, and had been entrusted by the Committee of Public Safety with the command of a siege-train. He found the general employed in erecting a battery four or five miles distant

[1] The English, too, complained of the badness of the Spanish, and still more of the Neapolitan, troops. Conf. Letters of Sir Sydney Smith, Captain Cook, and Sir George Elliot, to Lord Auckland, in the latter's correspondence III, 152.

from the enemy's fleet; and after exchanging a few words with him, convinced himself of the utter incapacity of his commander. After the first reconnoitre his quick eye discovered the key of the enemy's position; Cartaux, however, did not understand his plan at all, and only replied that he should warm Toulon for three days with his batteries, and then proceed to storm in three columns. Nevertheless Vincent, Hebert, and other patrons in Paris, supported him, and prevented Lapoype's appointment:[1] and when the Committee of Public Safety, in the middle of October, at last insisted on the appointment of another commander, Bouchotte would only exchange his *protégé* for General Doppet, at that time commander of the Army of the Alps, a physician from Chambery, who, like Cartaux, had risen to military honour as a demagogue. Doppet himself had some scruples about his own capacity; so that he did not reach the camp before Toulon until the 9th of November, at a time when the Committee of Public Safety had resolved, in spite of Bouchotte's opposition, to sanction Bonaparte's plan, and to transfer the command of the attack to Dugommier, of the Italian army — a genuine and excellent soldier, who had grown grey in battles. Doppet received intelligence of this on the 10th;[2] but before Dugommier's arrival, being engaged in a fight for an advanced position of the fortress, he suddenly ordered the retreat to be sounded, when a hostile bullet killed his adjutant close beside him, and brought the dangerous nature of the trade of war clearly before his eyes. The soldiers loudly cursed his cowardice, and the people who had appointed him to his post: "When," they cried, "will these Parisians cease to send us painters and physicians as generals?" Meanwhile Bonaparte had collected a park of

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[1] Some details on this subject will be found in the *Vieux Cordelier*, No. 5. — [2] The papers will be found in Doppet's memoirs. Napoleon's statements published in Gourgaud and Montholon are very incorrect.

artillery of 200 guns; reinforcements poured in on every side; and the army, which was gradually increased to 60,000 men,[1] immediately felt the strong and steady hand of a tried leader. They were now able, without further apprehension of an attack from the Allies, to commence the real assault of the place.

We need say the less respecting the military movements of the French army before Toulon, because Bonaparte's reputation has placed these occurrences in the clearest light before the world. The city of Toulon lies at the bottom of a bay about five miles long, which is divided by a promontory, jutting out from the west, into two roadsteads, an outer and an inner one. On that promontory, about a league from the city, the English, rightly recognising the importance of the post, had strongly fortified themselves. Bonaparte's plan was, to abstain from a direct attack upon the city, and to make himself master of that position, from which the fire of his artillery could sweep both harbours, and oblige the hostile fleets to leave them with all speed. He foresaw that in this case the Allies would not expose their garrisons to certain destruction, but would also evacuate the city without delay.[2] Accordingly, during the night of the 16th of December, the English fort was attacked by a picked column and taken after a desperate resistance. The expectations of Bonaparte were immediately fulfilled. The Allied council of war unanimously declared

[1] According to the lists in the *Archives de la guerre.* — [2] The new edition of the *Correspondance de Napoléon I.* shows that he considered this result very probable, but was nevertheless prepared for the case that the garrison, in spite of the departure of the fleet, should determine to stand a siege. The opinion expressed on the other side by Sir Sydney Smith, who was at that time in Toulon, is very interesting: "The nature of the ground is such round this extensive bay, that unless we possess and maintain every height and every point for fifteen miles in circumference, the enemy would be able to force the fleet to relinquish their anchorage." Letter to Lord Auckland, December 12th.

the place to be no longer tenable, and ordered the speedy embarcation of the troops. The consternation of the inhabitants, who were wholly taken by surprise, was boundless, and was but little calmed by the offer of the admirals to take every one on board the fleet, who had reason to fear for his safety under republican rule.[1] Thousands thronged to the quays with their hastily collected goods, every one tried to get before the others, and in the crowd women were separated from their husbands, and mothers from their children, and several of the overloaded boats turned over and buried the fugitives in the waves. Night came on and covered all this misery with darkness: the troops had already evacuated the forts on the hills, and the Republicans soon began to throw shells from thence on the confused mass of people, whose crowding now became so desperate, that the ships were obliged on their part to fire upon the fugitives, to prevent a fatal overloading of their vessels. At last, on the 19th, every thing was at an end. More than 4,000 Toulonese, including all who had in any way taken part in the revolt, were crowded together in the ships. The English took with them a part of the French men of war and set fire at the last moment to several others, as well as to a portion of the arsenal.

When the columns of the Republicans marched into the city, they found the streets deserted, the houses closed, and the whole place as quiet as the grave. The first intelligence which some Jacobins brought to the representatives of the people—Fréron, Barras, and Robespierre the younger—was that the most guilty had escaped: but Fréron replied, that there would be no want of victims of vengeance, since the whole town had loaded itself with disgrace and treachery. In the arsenal, about 400 dock-yard workmen came to meet him: when he heard that they had been employed during the foreign occupation of the place, he caused them to be

[1] The following details are taken from Lauvergne's *Hist. du départ du Var.*

cut down on the spot. It was his intention, in fact, to exterminate the whole population, and with this view he ordered all the inhabitants to be driven, on the third day, to a place lying under the batteries of a bastion, that they might be there annihilated by the fire of the artillery. But here, as in Lyons, the army refused to obey the commands of the bloody butchers, and General Dugommier rejected the suggestions of the representative with angry pride. Fréron then had recourse to a revolutionary troop, the so-called Allobroges—originally a legion of Savoyard volunteers, afterwards a rabble collected from the whole of southern France—which had already given proofs of its usefulness in Marseilles. With these men he set on foot a republican *fusillade* for three days successively, in which more than 800 citizens, selected partly by chance, and partly on account of their wealth, fell beneath the bullets of the Allobroges. A revolutionary tribunal was then established, which, without proof or examination, butchered more than 1,800 persons within three months. A third part of these were destroyed for the sake of their property, the rest from a mere delight in bloodshed. On occasion of the celebration of a republican festival, eleven young and beautiful women were sent to the scaffold, a twelfth was, indeed, pardoned on account of her pregnancy, but her head was first laid under the axe of the guillotine. The property of the condemned and the fugitives fell to the State. At first the representatives had promised it to the troops; but afterwards, under the pretence of an auction, it was so shamelessly thrown away on favoured patriots, that e. g. an estate which yielded 6,000 francs a year was sold for 10,000 francs in paper money. The rulers in Paris looked on at this murdering and plundering with the greatest indifference. The more dangerous the insurrection had been to the Republic, the less pity was to be found in any section of the Jacobins for the city of Toulon. When some one expressed a wish to appoint milder successors to Fréron and Barras, Danton said

"We want no soft-hearted maiden in Toulon, but only a guillotine and a number of executioners." "The Toulonese," said Merlin of Douay, "must all die, that the Republic may possess this stripe of coast in full security."

These acts seem already to exceed all bounds in atrocity. Yet they were still to be surpassed by the incalculable number of victims, and the ferocious brutality of the murderers, who, about the same time, brought the campaign in La Vendée to a horrible conclusion. In that country, as we have seen, Robespierre himself, with passionate eagerness, had enforced the system of all-destroying terrorism; had carried the appointment of Rossignol as commander-in-chief, and repelled all the attacks of the Dantonists on the incapacity of his *protégé*. Such was the seed which he sowed, when his object was to destroy the influence of the first Committee of Public Safety; the fruits came to maturity after he had raised himself from the ranks of the opposition to the highest position in the government. This attack upon La Vendée by the Armies of Mayence and Brest, Rochelle and Saumur, and a levy of the national guards of all the neighbouring districts—amounting in all to 70,000 troops of the line, and more than 100,000 of the general levy—was prepared at the same time on all sides, and commenced in the first half of September with the greatest energy. A mighty girdle of fire surrounded the unhappy land: villages, stacks of corn, and heaths, blazed up and disappeared in smoke; single detachments of peasants were defeated, every living thing that crossed the path of the army was destroyed; and the masses of the hostile army rolled forward towards the interior from all points of the frontier, driving the terrified population before them. But happily for the Vendeans, Rossignol was utterly unequal to the task of conducting an attack on such a colossal scale, and from points at such a distance from one another. He often remained hidden for several days together in the indulgence of idle debauchery; and when he did appear,

he only destroyed the connexion of the operations by hasty and ill-considered orders. Thus, for example, in the middle of December, he ordered the divisions of Sables d'Olonne and of Luçon to retreat, thereby bringing the Mayence troops under Canclaux[1] to a stand-still; and yet he allowed the column of Saumur—consisting of 40,000 men under Santerre—to advance, without any warning, by itself. The consequence was that the insurgent chiefs Laroche-Jacquelin and Piron, with about 12,000 men, very unexpectedly attacked the hero of the Faubourg St. Antoine, on the 17th, at Coron, and dispersed his troops after a short combat. The victors, by a rapid movement, then threw themselves upon the nearest column of the enemy under General Duhoux, and inflicted a bloody defeat upon them, on the 19th, at Beaulieu. By these victories the net which surrounded La Vendée was torn in two important places; and at the same time the cessation of the attack in the west and south gave the peasants time to collect and recover themselves. On the 19th, consequently, the Mayence troops themselves were beaten, after a hard struggle, at Torfou, by Charette and Lescure; General Beysser's force was dispersed at Montaigu on the 21st; and the Army of Brest compelled to beat a retreat at Nantes. When, in addition to this, General Mieskowski was driven from the field at St. Fulgent on the 23rd, the Royalists, after a ten day's campaign, saw their country entirely cleared of the enemy, a hundred pieces of captured canon in their hands, and the levy of national guards dispersed to the very last man.

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[1] This is the only important point in the mass of reproaches by which the different parties endeavoured to load one another with the blame of the subsequent defeats; and this point is sufficiently settled to the disadvantage of Rossignol by the despatches published in the "*Guerres des Vendéens*" II, 144. — Conf. Schulz, *Kriege in Europa* II, 266, and Poisson II, 434.

But this heroism, which was displayed during six months in splendid deeds of gallantry and self-sacrificing courage, only brought a momentary relief at best, since the peasants always dispersed immediately after a victory, the leaders were divided by jealous dissensions, and the land saw its resources daily melting away under the continued ravages of the enemy. Meanwhile the Republicans gained time and strength to repair their losses, and after a short interval to commence a fresh attack upon the exhausted districts. Rossignol, after his failure in La Vendée, had exchanged his post for a command in Bretagne; but he was succeeded, on Bouchotte's motion, by General Lechelle, a man of exactly the same *calibre*, and like-wise totally ignorant of military affairs; one who was ready enough to burn and plunder, but had not the remotest idea of the nature of the land, or the duties of his position; and who, e. g., broke off the negotiations of his first council of war, by ordering that the troops should "keep marching on majestically and *en masse*." It was lucky for the army that he always carefully kept himself at a safe distance during every engagement; which rendered it possible for the more able generals under his command—Kleber (who now commanded the Mayence troops), Marceau, and Westermann—to act independently. General Cauclaux had been punished for Rossignol's mistakes, by dismissal; yet it was according to his plan that hostilities were continued in October. Again the object was to march from the different frontiers of the Bocage to the centre of the land; this time they formed two chief columns, of which the one was to march from Nantes in a south-easterly direction, and the other from Bressuire towards the north-west, and finally unite in the country of Mortagne and Cholet. These movements were successfully carried out by Generals Kleber and Chalbos, amidst shocking devastation of the land, and after several engagements of various fortune. On the 16th of October the two columns had

reached Collet, and found themselves in the presence of the catholic Army of the Bocage, which, surrounded by fugitives from all parts of the country—women, children, old men, and sick persons—prepared to try the last struggle. But all the efforts of the peasants on this day were fruitless: the Republicans repelled one charge after another, and towards the evening the whole army of the insurgents left the battle-field, which was covered with 4,000 of their dead. With the victors in their rear and the broad stream of the Loire before them, they were lost, had not Lechelle's negligence opened to them a path of deliverance, and given a highly unexpected turn to the war.

The more clear-sighted chiefs of the Vendeans had often recognised the necessity of extending the theatre of the war to the neighbouring provinces, but had been unable to carry out their wishes in opposition to the peasants' tenacious love of home. It was the Marquis of Bonchamps who, on the day before the battle, had proposed crossing the Loire, and exciting the catholic population of Bretagne to take part in the struggle, as the last resource which was left them. At his instigation a division crossed the river at St. Florentin, while the engagement was still going on, routed the nearest post of the enemy at Varades, and thus made it possible for the beaten army—with the vast crowd of followers amounting to 100,000 men, of whom 30,000 were capable of bearing arms—to reach the opposite shore in safety. During Canclaux's command, when the line of the river was guarded with the most anxious care, such a success, which transferred the war to an entirely new theatre, would have been inconceivable; but Lechelle, thoroughly occupied by the battles in the interior, had forgotten all other precautions, and thus Bretagne, Anjou, and Maine, saw themselves exposed, almost without means of defence, to the attack of the Royalists. Kleber, indeed, strained every nerve to secure the towns on the right bank, and to overtake the enemy's army, which was pressing

forward to the north. Unhappily, however, when he had just got sight of the enemy on the 27th, not far from Laval, such absurd orders arrived from Lechelle, that the young Laroche-Jacquelin, who at that time commanded the Vendeans, inflicted a complete defeat upon the Republicans on the following day, and put their army to disorderly flight. Lechelle arrived just in time to see them disperse: he had such a bad reputation among the soldiers, that when he addressed a flying troop with the words "Why must I lead such cowards?" one of the soldiers replied, "Why must we be led by such scoundrels?" He died soon afterwards of a violent fever, and Bouchotte hastened to hand over the command-in-chief once more to his worthy associate Rossignol. The Committee of Public Safety confirmed the appointment, contented for the present that La Vendée had been transformed for miles upon miles to an uninhabited wilderness of smoking ruins; and Rossignol, on his part, declared that he considered it an evil that there should be humane people in a revolution. But the country was opened far and wide, in all directions, to the victorious army of the Royalists.

The consequences which might have resulted from the present position of the Vendeans become clear to us when we remember the sentiments of the Breton peasants, the vicinity of the English Channel fleet, and the possibility of a junction with Coburg and York. The misfortune of the Vendeans was, that their troops were retarded and hampered in all their movements by the enormous crowd which followed them; that their leader was too young to exercise a commanding influence, and the members of their war council continually at variance in their opinions. They wavered for a whole week in Laval between plans against Rennes, Paris and Normandy, and decided at last to besiege the little maritime town of Granville, in order to gain secure means of communication with England. It was not until the 14th of November, therefore, that the Vendeans arrived

at that place, and began the attack; but they were repulsed in a series of battles which lasted two days, and Larochè-Jacquelin was compelled to retreat by a sudden despondency among his men. The peasants now tumultuously demanded to be led back to La Vendée, and their incontrollable violence rendered all regular conduct of the war impossible. In this state of things, Rossignol came up with the combined troops of the Army of the west and the Army of Cherbourg, believing that he had already shut in the rebels at Dol, between the marshes of the coast and the waves of the ocean; but he allowed himself, on the 22nd, to be surprised near Antrain, and there suffered the bloodiest defeat of the whole war. The Vendeans, although weakened by their late victories, and quickly decreased in numbers by the toils of a winter campaign, then marched undisturbed through Bretagne, reached the Loire at Angers, and prepared to capture this city to secure their passage over the river. But General Danican, although left by Rossignol for several days without any aid, made a successful stand. The Vendeans, with their spirit once more broken, turned their backs upon the city; and, what was by no means of less importance, the Committee of Public Safety just at this moment screwed up its courage, in spite of Hebert and Bouchotte, to remove the mischievous bungler Rossignol, and to entrust the chief command to the young General Marceau, an able and enthusiastic soldier. From this time forward, while the spirit, discipline, and order of the Vendeans were hopelessly sinking from day to day, new life was infused into all the movements of the Republicans. General Westermann, by his perpetual cavalry charges, left the insurgents no time to breathe; he chased them out of La Fleche to Mans, and beat them there, on the 12th, in a decisive and annihilating battle. As no quarter had been given for a long time past—as all the wounded were cut down, and aged men and women were shot as well as the soldiers—that one day cost more than 15,000 people their lives. The totally disorganised remnant

of the Catholic army then wandered for weeks on the banks of the Loire, vainly seeking an unguarded passage. Laroche escaped with a handful of men to his home, and a few thousands found refuge and concealment in the houses of sympathising peasants in Bretagne; but all the rest were either destroyed in a series of engagements, which lasted till the end of December, or were dragged to the prisons of the nearest towns, to find a still more horrible fate. The campaign in the north of the Loire was brought to a close by the utter destruction of the vanquished.

Meanwhile the representatives Carrier at Nantes, and Francastel at Angers, had organised their criminal tribunals, or rather their murderous bands, and were heaping up all the inhuman atrocities which the system of terror had anywhere devised, into a ruthless mass of crime. Their military tribunals sent from 150 to 200 persons a day to be shot; Carrier then ordered the prisoners to be drowned by hundreds; of wholesale noyades of this nature, which took place in Nantes, Saumier, Angers, Paimbœuf and Chateau-Gontier, four have been officially proved as coming from Nantes alone, in which more than 1,500 persons perished, and there are disputed, but still highly probable, accounts respecting nineteen others. 1,560 Vendéans, who had laid down their arms, trusting to a capitulation which was granted them, were immediately massacred; several thousand other prisoners were carried of by disease in the over-filled and plague-stricken prisons. The lowest sum-total of victims who fell during Carrier's four months' activity in Nantes amounts to 15,000 — rebellious peasants, catholic priests, citizens of Nantes, Jacobin proletaries; just as personal hatred, intoxicated despotism,

[1] Moniteur, 13. Frim. III. p. 308, 2nd col. In this very place a witness declares that 400 children, whom he had seen, had been drowned. Similar statements on the 11th and 16th of Frimaire.

or local enmity, happened to bring them under the hands of the executioners.[1]

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[1] The military commission in Nantes alone caused 4,000 people to be executed in 21 days Conf. C. N. 8, Vendem. III; 1, 2, 3, Frim. III.

CHAPTER IV.

PARTY FEUDS AMONG THE JACOBINS.

PHILIPPEAUX BRINGS CHARGES AGAINST THE AGENTS OF THE MINISTER-AT-WAR. —THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY EXPERIENCES THE EVILS OF ANARCHY.—ROBESPIERRE SEPARATES HIMSELF FROM THE HEBERTISTS.—INFLUENCE OF FABRE D'EGLANTINE.—ROBESPIERRE'S FIRST OPEN ATTACK ON THE HEBERTIST FACTION.—ROBESPIERRE DECLARES AGAINST ATHEISM. —COALITION BETWEEN DANTON AND ROBESPIERRE.—LAW OF DECEMBER THE 4TH.—DESMOULINS PUBLISHES THE "VIEUX CORDELIER".—ANGER OF THE CONVENTION.—ROBESPIERRE ATTACKS COLLOT D'HERBOIS AND BOUCHOTTE.—ROBESPIERRE IN FAVOUR OF A MILDER TREATMENT OF "SUSPECTS". —COLLOT D'HERBOIS RETURNS FROM LYONS.—CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF AFFAIRS.—ROBESPIERRE CHANGES SIDES.—DISTRESS OF THE DANTONISTS. —ST. JUST'S INFLUENCE ON THE PARTY CONTEST.—COUTHON AND ST. JUST ORDER THE CONFISCATION OF THE PROPERTY OF "SUSPECTS".—ST. JUST ATTACKS THE DANTONISTS.—UNEXPECTED ATTEMPT AT INSURRECTION ON THE PART OF THE HEBERTISTS.—THE COMMITTEE RESOLVES TO ANNIHILATE BOTH PARTIES.—FALL OF THE HEBERTISTS.—DISSOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY.—FALL OF THE DANTONISTS.—POSITION OF AFFAIRS.

SUCH were the results which the Mountain had obtained during its few months' rule in the French Republic. The land lay overpowered at its feet, plundered in every direction, and everywhere deluged with blood; the nation retained no remembrance of the ruined past, it had been driven far away from the hopes of the first period of the Revolution, and was cut off from all chance of liberation.

But Nemesis, who always appears in the history of this Revolution endowed with a power corresponding to the crime she avenges, rose with frightful rapidity from the blood of the civil wars. The terrible atonement consisted in this, that it was just by the crimes committed at Lyons,

Toulon, and La Vendée, that the feud between the rulers was kindled, which was destined to destroy the yoke of the enslaved people, by causing the mutual destruction of the tyrants.

Philippeaux, deputy of La Sarthe, had always belonged to the most zealous party of the Mountain, and had voted for the death of the King, the destruction of Dumouriez, and the omnipotence of the revolutionary tribunal. But as commissioner in La Vendée, he had observed from a near point the mischievous and disgraceful proceedings of Ronsin and Rossignol, and, after the defeats of December, he hurried back to denounce them everywhere—in the Convention, in the club, and in the Committee of Public Safety—as the cause of the long-continued failure of the war.

The former adversaries of Rossignol—Bourdon de l'Oise, Goupilleau and Westermann—joined Philippeaux, and extended the agitation, which he had begun, through the whole country. The Committee of Public Safety, however, who regarded Rossignol as their own creature, rejected these complaints at first with cold and almost menacing hauteur. Danton, with whom Philippeaux was very intimate, had withdrawn shortly before from Paris, to enjoy his new conjugal happiness; but Philippeaux was not to be hindered even by his absence, and continued to bring forward his indignant charges on every opportunity. He thereby drew upon himself the most violent counter-charges from some representatives attached to the Army of the West, who were in alliance with Ronsin; but various circumstances combined to place the Committee of Public Safety, in an impartial attitude, at least between Philippeaux and his opponents.

In the first place the occurrences which followed one another with startling rapidity on the banks of the Loire fully confirmed his statements. After the passage of the Vendéans over the river, the Committee began seriously to doubt the excellence of their present instruments, and sent two of their own members, Jean-bon St. André and

Prieur, to reconnoitre the position of affairs and to urge on Rossignol. In the next place Bouchotte's friends made an equally bad appearance in other theatres of the war: Carteaux, who was at that time before Toulon—the fall of which the Committee were expecting with painful impatience—was daily loading himself with disgrace and shame; and Couthon, also, returned from Lyons in an irritated state of mind, ready to confirm all the complaints which were sent thence concerning Collot's and Ronsin's cruelties. In Paris itself, where the guillotine was daily at work, the rulers observed what a very unfavourable impression had been made on the population. A crowd of beggars, to whom the Government paid four-twenty sous a day, applauded the executioner; but with this exception it was found that, even among the proletaries, fanaticism was stifled by compassion, and that among these hitherto devoted adherents of democracy, attachment to the Republic was changed to disgust and horror. The Committee thought it desirable to diminish the shedding of blood, at least for a certain time—to incarcerate rather than to decapitate, and to seek the property of the arrested rather than their heads—a sentiment inspired, not by humanity, but by policy, but which, nevertheless, inevitably estranged the Hebertists from them.[1]

The Committee, moreover, became every day moredis contented with its own condition. However unconditionally the nation was subjected to its rule, it could by no means reckon upon order trustworthiness and obedience in its own agents. The general lawlessness with which the conventional commissioners, the communal councillors and club-men, rioted in the blood and treasure of France, had a most disastrous effect upon the finances. While the State treasury was complaining that the plundered citizens could contribute nothing more to their favorite compulsory loan

[1] Mallet du Pan, Mém. II, 65.

of a milliard,[1] only a very inconsiderable part of the revolutionary taxes and requitisions came into the hands of the Government. The articles of clothing which St. Just had confiscated in Strasburg were rotting in the magazines, without any advantage to the army; of the fifteen million francs which he exacted from Alsace, scarcely a third, and of Tallien's extortions in Bordeaux, not a farthing, was ever paid into the treasury.[2] It was the same everywhere else. The taxes were for the most part spent in luxury by the revolutionary committees, or pocketed by the conventional commissioners, or otherwise squandered in the general confusion. This was, indeed, the necessary consequence of Jacobin principles; but a Jacobin government, just because it was a government, could not possibly be contented with such a state of things. Since the beginning of November the Committee of Public Safety had been occupied with plans for reorganising the administration, reconstituting a public service, and extending its own prerogatives. When, with this view, it considered the position of different parties, it felt secure of the gratitude of the Centre, and the adhesion of most of the Dantonists. The old party of the Right had no longer any weight, but the opposition of Vincent and Hebert was certain and dangerous, and the first step, therefore, must be the humiliation of these adversaries. Of the members of the Committee, Collot d'Herbois, Herault de Sechelles, Prieur de la Marne, Jeanbon St. André and St. Just were absent;[3] Carnot troubled himself very little about non-military questions, and Lindet and Barère were accustomed to vote with the majority. But Billaud-Varennes, usually a warm friend of the Hôtel de Ville, was flattered by the prospect of an increase of his own power; and Couthon had long regarded the Hebertists

[1] Cambon's report of the 16th of December 1795. — [2] Report of the financial Committee of the 6th of Frim. III. — [3] Granet had resigned immediately after his appointment.

with no other feeling than aversion and disgust. Under these circumstances, the fact that Robespierre finally made up his mind openly to attack the Hebertists decided the question at once.

We may imagine that it was not without reluctance that the dictator entered on this path. The power of the opposite party was alone sufficient to make such a course dangerous, and Robespierre had always been a friend of cautious and concealed action. He had, moreover, risen to power with his present opponents, had obtained his most important victories by their support and friendship, and, in return, had praised all the actions which he was now about to denounce. How could he break with them without coming into conflict with his own past? But that which most of all, perhaps, deterred him was, that he could not enter into a contest with them, without seeking the aid of associates doubly hateful to him. With the exception of a demoniacal ambition, he had no strong passion, and possessed neither devoted warmth nor fresh enthusiasm. On the contrary, his whole nature was narrow and calculating, and his acquirements were the result of painful labour. He was conscious of this himself, and felt it bitterly, but still struggled on with restless and unceasing efforts. No feeling, consequently, was more fully developed in his heart, than a deep and spiteful hatred against those happier and more gifted natures, who by their mere appearance gained affection and success; who, perhaps, passed the day in frivolous enjoyment, and yet, at the decisive moment, suddenly took their station, with easy andacity, at the head of the victors. Thus of all the leaders of the Gironde he had hated Vergniaud most —the dreamy inactive man who, whenever he came forward, was always alike amiable and irresistible. Danton, too, for the same reason, had always been the object of his dislike— an object at once of contempt, on account of his filthy debauchery, and of envy, on every occasion which brought out his rude and boisterous energy. He had found the latter

incessantly crossing his path, since the month of April, and had employed every means of party warfare to drive him from the seat of government. After having at last succeeded in this, was he once more to beg for his friendship and help, and to make his implacable hatred yield to the claims of a transient political object?

That which at last brought him to this point was—we may be assured—no impulse of humanity or justice, roused by the daily increasing atrocities of Collot and Hebert, Fouché and Ronsin; for all the regulations and laws which those men had required he had himself helped to create; nay, in a great measure he had alone created them. He had always wished to make the revolutionary tribunal bloodier than it afterwards became; he had signalised his entrance into the Committee by the decree against La Vendée, which ordered a general massacre of more than 100,000 people, without distinction of guilt and innocence. But the same features of his character which separated him from Danton, repelled him also from the Hebertists. The less fresh creative power he had, the more fully was the taste for order, even to pedantry, developed in him: the less he felt himself suited to bold enterprise and conflict, the more easily excited was his distrust of the self-will of others. Now, the party of the Hôtel de Ville was made up entirely of lawlessness and disorder, and a breach with it, therefore, was as much in accordance with Robespierre's inmost feelings as with the general state of affairs.

To this was added a personal influence which had been operative for some time past. Among the most confidential and intimate friends of Danton was a *quondam* actor, Fabre d'Eglantine, a man to whom that well-known description of an older *intriguant* may be applied, that he had no soul, but in its place only pools and shallows on which the most experienced steersman might get stranded. He was Danton's tool in all affairs which shunned the light—in his

dealings with the royal civil list, and in the preparation of the September massacres. He was always to be seen, busy without any clearly defined object, living in spendour without any visible income, and feared by all the world without any apparent reason. This man, who was in sufficiently bad odour at the Hôtel de Ville as Danton's friend, came on the 27th of September to Robespierre, with secret and extensive disclosures concerning the plans of Hebert.[1] The object, he said, was gradually to break up the Convention, by sending all the obnoxious or influential deputies to the guillotine—first the seventy-three, then Danton and Lacroix, and afterwards Billaud and Robespierre. At the same time, the Convention was to be degraded in public opinion, the Proletariate was to be attached to the party of Hebert as originators of the law of the *maximum*, and lastly, by the help of the revolutionary army, the War Ministry, and the majority of the Jacobin clubs, possession was to be openly taken of the chief power of the State. There was nothing improbable in these statements. Hebert had already demanded that the War Ministry should be made independent; and, only three days before, the club of the Cordéliers had protested, at Vincent's instigation, against the interference of the conventional commissioners with Bouchotte's orders; while, on the 25th, Robespierre had to give a long explanation at the Jacobin club on this very point. No one, therefore, doubted that Vincent and Hebert wished to get the power of the Committee into their own hands; but it was another question, how far this desire had, at that time, taken the form of a settled plan. Fabre, however, from his long

[1] There exists among the papers of the Committee of Public Safety a sketch of a report written towards the end of November entitled *Conspiration Hébert*, from which the following statements are taken. They confirm in this place, too, the correctness of Mallet's account (Mem. II, 39) and the entire untrustworthiness of that contained in Buchez, vols. 30 and 31.

intercourse with the very scum of the city party, found no difficulty in procuring credit for his statements by giving a number of remarkable particulars, and he obtained an order to the *Comité de Sûreté générale* for the strict surveillance of these intrigues.

As soon as men once began to look at the proceedings of the Hebertists from such a point of view, grounds for suspicion and complaint could not but accumulate fast enough. We know with what a mass of infamy these men had loaded themselves in their money dealings: and Fabre had directed several of his charges against these delinquencies, and had warned the Government against the ex-Capuchin Chabot, among others, and some of his associates. The latter, on their part, were prosecuting the great finance companies in the Convention with noisy zeal, but, as was alleged, had no other object than their own enrichment and an increase of the pecuniary resources of the conspiracy. On the 8th of October, Chabot's friend Delaunai actually carried a motion in the Convention for the suppression of the Indian trading company: whereupon Fabre, supported by Robespierre, obtained an enactment, that the property of the company should be sealed up, and its liquidation managed by officers of the State. Chabot and his associates thus lost the chance of plundering the treasures of the company for themselves, and a few days afterwards Fabre reported that they had offered him 100,000 francs if he would use his influence to repeal that decree. Similar manœuvres by the same authors could be easily brought home to them, and, indeed, there was nothing of this kind of which they were not capable. Chabot, especially, was as vile debauched and shameless a fellow as any runaway Capuchin that ever lived. At this time he married the sister of a rich banker, who hoped to derive advantage from the connexions of the patriotic monk; and although an agent of Robespierre and Danton, named Dufourny, lashed him severely in the Jacobin club on account of this business,

the Hebertists carried their point, that the club should send a solemn deputation to his wedding. Robespierre was enraged, and his anger was not softened when Hebert, immediately afterwards, spoke in his journal of the rapacity of the vultures and wolves who governed France. Dufourny immediately caused the circulation of the number to be stopped by the police of the Department, and, at the same time, had two men arrested, one of whom had been engaged in furthering the correspondence of the Jacobins, and the other in working upon the Parisian proletaries in Hebert's favour.[1] But the influence of the Hebertists once more prevailed in the club. The Jacobins, among whom Collot d'Herbois used all his influence in favour of Hebert, procured the liberation of both, and sent the condemned number of the *Pere Duchesne* to all the popular societies with whom they were connected.

During these skirmishes, which lasted throughout October, the Hebertists displayed the warmest veneration for Robespierre, which the latter returned by a contemptuous indifference towards Hebert and Chabot, and secretly entered into closer relations with Fabre, Camille Desmoulins, and Danton; so that, by the beginning of November—when Collot's departure for Lyons gave him a freer field in the Committee of Public Safety—he was ready to commence the conflict. Hebert gave him an opportunity of announcing the change in his attitude on the 8th, when the former charged the conventional commissioners Fréron at Toulon, and Duquesnoi, who was with the Army of the North, of various abuses, and especially of protecting incapable generals who were connected with themselves. Robespierre appeared, on the 9th, with Duquesnoi, called upon the latter to demonstrate the virtual groundlessness of the accusations, and added, on his own part, the general declaration, that there were two kinds of enemies to the Republic; on the

[1] Desfieux and Proli.

one side, the weak and deluded patriots, who were only the echo of their seducers, and, on the other, the disguised missionaries of the hostile courts—of Pitt and Coburg—who calumniated the patriotic generals, and thereby endeavoured to divide the Republicans, and set themselves up in the place of the Committee of Public Safety. The Assembly here interrupted him with the cry that he must remain at his post; Hebert answered not a word, and two days afterwards solemnly withdrew his charges against Duquesnoi; he was evidently surprised and embarrassed by the undisguised attack made upon him. Still stronger was the impression produced on the utterly weak and unprincipled Chabot, who already saw himself in imagination involved in the fall of the city party, and, in his agony, resolved upon a step of the most contemptible meanness. He went in person to Robespierre, told him that Hebert and Chaumette had drawn him into a conspiracy against the Convention in the preceding August; that the deputies Julien and Delaunai had undertaken to procure the necessary funds; and that he had joined them in order to make himself acquainted with their crime; but that he now begged for strict investigation and condign punishment.

Robespierre did not neglect to follow up this important advantage. On the 17th he made a report to the Convention, in the name of the Committee, respecting the foreign policy of France, which, as regarded European questions, was entirely in accordance with Danton's views, and formed a most striking contrast to the phrases—"overthrow of tyrants" and "universal war"—in Robespierre's Rights of Man. He praised the system of a moderate policy, offered the protection of France to the smaller States of Europe, and promised to all neutrals a strict observance of their rights. These diplomatic utterances did not go beyond general principles, and the Committee of Public Safety was still far from carrying them into action, but, on the contrary, continued its revolutionary intrigues in the neutral territory

of Genoa, and remained deaf to the prayers of Sweden for help and protection.[1] In this report, Robespierre was thinking, not of Europe, but of the factions at home. As he could not attack the acts of the Hebertists, in which he had taken so great a part, it was necessary to convict them of treasonable designs. Robespierre, therefore, spoke of a party who loudly blew the war trumpet in order to isolate France in the world, and who sullied the Revolution with every kind of abomination, in order to estrange the love of the nations from it. He did not for a moment leave his hearers in doubt as to whom he alluded, since he, at the same time, warned them of the "cruel *moderatism*" (of the former Committee of Public Safety) and "the systematic exaggeration of false patriots" (Hebert and Vincent). But he soon threw off all disguise, and revealed to his hearers Fabre's and Chabot's disclosures, with a direct reference to the Hebertists. "Punish," he cried, "the basest of all crimes—the counter-Revolution under the mask of patriotism—the murder of freedom with her own weapons. All these threads are gathered together in the hands of the infamous London ministers, and it is Pitt who guides all these pretended democrats; every indication, every piece of intelligence, every intercepted despatch, proves that an attempt is being made, by bribing the venal deputies of the people, and assassinating those who are incorruptible, to bring about the dissolution of the Convention."

The Convention listened to these statements with the applause which was now a matter of course, but did nothing themselves towards taking the matter up. Whereupon Robespierre made another step towards his object. In the evening, Chabot with one of his most intimate associates, a merchant named Bazire, was directed to repeat his charges officially to the *Comité de Sûreté générale*, which thereupon detained them both, and at the same time ordered the ar-

[1] According to Staël's above-mentioned despatches.

rest of Delauny and a certain Julien. Robespierre's friend, Amar, announced to the Convention on the 18th, that a conspiracy had been discovered the object of which was the dissolution of the Convention. He was unable, he said, to communicate further particulars, because other persons, not belonging to the Convention, were implicated. These words referred to no less a body than the Parisian Municipality itself. The *Comité de Sûreté générale* was already engaged in preparing a formal act of impeachment, and it is interesting to see in what colours this sketch of a report endeavoured to pourtray the revolutionary acts of Chaumette and Hebert. "They are aiming," it said, at "breaking up the Convention by bribery and calumny—at stirring up the Communal authorities—at promoting anarchy amongst the people, by the multiplication of powers—at establishing the sovereignty of individuals, by the exaggeration of liberty and equality—and at the destruction of all faith in the immortality of the soul. They wish to make us odious in men's eyes by immorality and lawlessness—to accustom the people to contempt of all authority, to unbridled licence and the love of pleasure—to bring their creatures into every office, and to squander the property of the State. They wish to establish a tumultuous liberty, a violent equality, and a burlesque philosophy, disgusting to every reasonable being; and finally to hand over the land, ruined by such means, to the tyrants."

Well-founded as all these reproaches were—with the exception of the absurd invention that the faction was in the pay of England—it still appeared to Robespierre, on closer consideration, too dangerous a thing to proceed at once against the city party as a whole: this draft therefore remained hidden, for the present, among the papers of the *Comité de Sûreté générale.* In its stead it was resolved, in the first place, to undermine the authority of the Hebertists in the Jacobin club, to strike down the more important members of the party singly, and to take advantage of the

intimidation of the rest to strengthen the power of the Committee of Public Safety. Accordingly, Robespierre rose, on the 21st, in the Jacobin club, to denounce the wickedness and sacrilegious conduct of the Hebertists. He had, indeed, never shared their atheistic zeal, and, according to Rousseau's example, adhered to a belief in divine Providence: but still his religion was pliant enough to allow of his proclaiming in his sketch of "the Rights of Man," not a personal God, but Nature, as the sovereign of the universe. His most intimate companions, St. Just and Couthon, treated the churches, as we have seen, in a manner entirely in accordance with Hebert's views; and we find the dictator himself, at a later period, proclaiming, indeed, the existence of a divine being, but, at the same time, warning men not to restore religious ceremonies.[1] In short, if it had not been for political and party reasons, he would have been no more offended at the annihilation of Christian worship, than he had previously been at the persecution of the catholic clergy. The present object, however, was to find some point of attack against the Hebertists; and there could be no doubt that by taking up the question of religion, he would earn the applause of millions, and, at the same time, follow the dictates of policy. Even in Paris the ferment against the desecrators of the churches was clearly perceptible; while from the provinces every courier brought the most urgent and alarming news. An agent in Lyons reported that the rural population were prepared for any other sacrifice, but that they would break out into wides-pread rebellion, if their priests were not restored to them. In Bretagne the presence of the Vendéans might be expected to produce the worst consequences, if the peasants, who had long been in a state of discontent, were further irritated by the destruction of their churches. In fact, the most shortsighted observer could not overlook the danger, which irreligious fanaticism was bringing

[1] Debates of the Jacobin club, 25th of May 1794.

on the Republican Government. Robespierre spoke on this point in the Jacobin club with enthusiasm and energy; he found happy and almost inspired words, and, in spite of the surprise of the club, obtained an undoubted majority. Encouraged by this success, he proposed to the club a general sifting of its members: every one was to pass through an examination of his previous conduct, and was only to be tolerated in the society, after he had safely stood this fiery test.

Danton returned to Paris just at this time, and immediately seconded Robespierre's efforts with the greatest zeal. He carried a resolution in the Convention, that no religious masquerades should take place for the future in the hall of the national representatives. At the same time he demanded that a strict enquiry should be instituted against all conspirators in foreign pay; that the system of terror should only be used against the really guilty; and that the powers of government should be developed and enlarged. He met with some opposition when he advocated milder treatment of the weak and the neutral;[1] yet the Convention passed the decrees proposed by him, and the immediate object—a new law respecting the powers of the Committee of Public Safety—was obtained. Billaud-Varennes had already introduced it on the 18th, but it had then been returned to the Committee to be remodelled. It is a striking proof of the progress of reaction, that this law was discussed in all its articles, and without opposition, on the 29th and following days, and adopted *en bloc* on the 4th of December. By this enactment all the authorities were placed under the direct supervision of the Committee of Public Safety; every Minister was to make his report to it on the affairs of his department, once a week; all revolutionary and police affairs were transferred to Communal councils and revolutionary Committees

[1] The Moniteur mutilates the phrase out of consideration for the terrorists of the Convention.

under the surveillance of the district officers, who were to receive direct instructions on the subject from the two government Committees. But the heaviest blow to the Hebertists was the regulation, that the revolutionary Committees of the different Sections in Paris were no longer to be under the orders of the Municipality, but directly responsible to the Conventional *Comité de Sûreté Générale.* A series of other provisions had all the same end in view—to limit, nay to destroy, the independence of the Communal councils, and to make them nothing more than subordinate organs of the government Committees. With similar intentions the revolutionary armies which had not been formed by the Convention were disbanded; the troops of this kind which were still kept on foot were placed under military discipline, and prohibited from all interference in judicial or police affairs—provisions which cut the very roots of the power of the Parisian Municipality and its adherents. By the enforcement of this law, the Committee of Public Safety took possession, not in name only, but in reality, of the whole power of the State.

The Commune writhed beneath these repeated blows, full of bitterness and desire of vengeance, but uncertain whether to yield to their fears, or to venture on resistance. As late as the 23rd of November, they had answered Robespierre's speech in the club by closing all the churches in Paris; but, on the 28th, they revoked their own orders with piteous lamentations. On the 1st of December, they made an attempt to assemble about them all the revolutionary Committees of the Sections; and, on the 4th, in consequence of the prohibition of the Convention, they dismissed the men who were already present in the Hôtel de Ville with a patriotic embrace. But they now saw themselves and their friends continually threatened in new quarters, and with more and more dangerous weapons. Since the fall of the Gironde they had completely ruled the press, but they now received, from this side also, a terrible and double blow, when

Philippeaux published his charges against Ronsin and Rossignol; and Camille Desmoulins founded a journal under the title of "*le vieux Cordélier*," in which he pourtrayed all the atrocities of the Reign of Terror with admirable eloquence, and referred them, after the manner of Robespierre's report, to the treacherous plans of the Hebertists. The impression made by these two publications was immense. Tyranny had hitherto weighed upon the land with such a stifling weight, that a note of opposition, and especially such a bold and clear note as Desmoulins now raised, appeared to the nation like the announcement of a new era. It was only known to a few initiated persons, that those writings were published at the instigation of Robespierre, and consequently under the protection of the Committee of Public Safety; that Robespierre himself corrected the sheets of the "*le vieux Cordélier*" before they were printed off; and that it was really the Government itself which in this way ventured an appeal to public opinion. But the applause and the rapture which they caused was all the more universal on that account; thousands and hundreds of thousands of copies of the "*le vieux Cordélier*," were circulated in a few days; they brought consolation and hope into the prisons, roused the citizens in their Sections, and the peasants in their villages, and excited the intimidated mass of the population to loud expressions of fury against the stigmatized faction. The effect produced by these writings in the Convention and the Jacobin club was not less than among the people without. All those who in any degree took part with Hebert or Bouchotte thought of nothing but revenge on the audacious writer, who had ventured with criminal hand to desecrate the sanctuary of the democratic revolution. But even the other section of the Mountain, the men who usually followed Robespierre or Danton, notwithstanding all their hatred against Hebert, were far from being of one mind with Desmoulins. They had all taken as zealous a part in the ill-treatment of the people as any

of the Hebertists; they had made and administered the laws concerning *accaparence* and the *maximum*, concerning requisitions and *suspects*, as well as the friends of Pache and Bouchotte; they saw themselves convicted and condemned, in an equal degree with the latter, by the public opinion to which Desmoulins had appealed. They certainly did not wish to give up their omnipotent power to the Commune, and were satisfied that its pretensions should he exposed to suspicion as machinations of Pitt; but they intended to maintain their own despotism at any cost, and regarded every word which Desmoulins directed against the system of the September laws, as a deadly insult to themselves. And thus it happened that by the publication of the "*le vieux Cordélier*" a change of feeling was brought about in the Convention favourable to the Hebertists—a change which made itself quickly felt in the Committee of Public Safety. On the 6th of December the Convention, on the motion of the Committee, had forbidden all interference in the full exercise of public worship, and had enacted, on the 8th, that no revolutionary tax could be imposed without a decree of the Convention. Both these regulations were in the highest degree disagreeable to the Hebertists; but they at the same time limited the omnipotence of the conventional commissioners, and the Committee—in the present sensitive and irritable state of its adherents—could not prevent the passing of an additional clause, on the 8th, that both the decrees were only to have a prospective operation, and were not to invalidate the commands already issued by the conventional commissioners. From the incalculable number of orders already issued, the effect of the decrees was really annulled by this provision. To the same category belonged a law of the 7th, which confiscated, for the benefit of the nation, the lands of all citizens whose sons or daughters had emigrated.

Nevertheless Robespierre still adhered firmly to his plan. The Municipality had been subjected to the Committee by

the law of the 4th of December; it had been beaten on the Church question in the club, and been proscribed in the public press by Camille Desmoulins. The second half of the task, which had still greater influence on the relative power of parties, had still to be performed—viz. the humiliation of the War Ministry, of which Philippeaux's pamphlet had only given a preliminary notice. Barère made the first step in this direction in his report on two civil commissioners of Lyons, who had been appointed by the Committee of Public Safety, and were deeply implicated in the horrible crimes committed in that city. Barère exposed them to public odium without ceremony; and the Convention decreed, on the motion of the Dantonist Merlin, that a minute examination into their conduct should be made by the Committee. These were two second-rate men, distinguished by nothing but their utter brutality; but, from the very first moment, every one knew that their cause was bound up with that of their patron Ronsin—nay, that the enquiry would necessarily reach the great chief Collot d'Herbois himself. The presence of Collot in the Committee had long been a cause of embarrassment to Robespierre, and this was another reason for commencing the contest with the Lyonese affair; Couthon, too, took a still more lively interest in every measure which was calculated to ruin his successors in Lyons. On the 14th, he carried a resolution in the Jacobin club for instituting a strict enquiry into the political and moral conduct of all the officials in the War Ministry. Two days afterwards, Fabre d'Eglantine announced to the Committee, that Vincent was again talking of establishing a constitutional Ministry; "We shall," he said to one of the deputies, "compel the Convention to make the ministers independent, as the Constitution prescribes; we are tired of being slaves of the Committee of Public Safety." A member of the Committee then shewed Fabre a letter from Bordeaux, in which the same intrigues were announced, and allowed him to make a copy of the passages in ques-

tion.[1] It was, therefore, no doubt with the full consent of the Committee, that Fabre, on the following day, made a motion in the Convention for the arrest of Vincent. He likewise read a letter of Ronsin, which Vincent had printed and posted in all the streets of the capital, to the effect that Lyons contained 120,000 inhabitants of whom only 1,500 were innocent; and that, in a short time, the Rhone would receive the bloody corpses of all the rest. Bourdon and others moved the arrest of Ronsin and Maillard; and being strongly supported by Couthon, further proposed that the ministers should give an account of the character of every one of their officials. We see that the Dantonists had taken up the part of public accusers. But they were backed by the whole weight of the Committee of Public Safety, and the Convention sanctioned all these proposals without a dissentient voice. A further motion of Bourdon, indeed, to do away with the Council of Ministers altogether, was referred to the Committee of Public Safety: it was, as we shall hereafter see, entirely in accordance with Robespierre's views; but he did not consider that the time was come for carrying it into execution.

Meanwhile the new turn of affairs had caused the greatest excitement throughout the whole of France. Everywhere the hope of a more humane Government revived, and the oppressed began to make themselves heard; it no longer seemed a crime, at any rate, to pity misfortune, to hope for better days, and to beg for mercy towards the persecuted. As early as the 13th, a numerous deputation of women appeared in the Convention to supplicate pardon for those who had been wrongfully arrested. On the 20th, a more numerous body appeared, with still more urgent petitions; and immediately after them came delegates from the Lyonese citizens, who claimed, not only the mercy of the Convention for the victims, but just punishment of the

[1] Fabre to the *Comité de Sûreté générale* 11, Pluv. II, in Buchet 30, 383.

murderers. Robespierre spoke first on the Parisian petition; indulged in the usual expressions of wrath against the aristocrats, and the enemies of freedom, but ended by proposing that the two Government Committees should be empowered to name commissioners to find out those who had been unjustly arrested, and to propose their liberation to the Committees. This was but a trifling consolation; it was still undisguised despotism without a shadow of law; but it seemed an immense progress that revolutionary omnipotence should for once be employed in the interests of mercy. The French people were so thoroughly enslaved, that Robespierre had attained, by his opposition to Hebert, a certain popularity among the middle classes, which was not a little increased by the decree of the 20th. He was well aware of this, and thought it of great importance; it afforded him the distant possibility of gaining new and unexpected props to his power, if the Jacobins should one day entirely throw off his yoke.

But the laws of God do not allow the same hand to destroy the temple of Justice to-day, and to build it up again to-morrow. He who once sins against freedom and morality, like the creator of the revolutionary Tribunal and the destroyer of La Vendée, makes of his own misdeeds an insuperable barrier, which irrevocably cuts him off from all return into the paths of righteousness. For four years Robespierre had employed all the resources of his tenacious and indefatigable mind in developing the system of popular despotism: he now found that the toils which he had spread were wide and strong enough to hold him in their meshes, even against his own will.

Four and twenty hours after that Lyonese deputation, Collot d'Herbois, the chief of the Lyonese murderers, appeared in Paris, to the surprise of both friends and foes, and was received by Robespierre with concealed anger, and by the Jacobins with tumultuous joy. He was well aware of Robespierre's feelings towards him; he had watched the

development of the reaction step by step, and he understood at a glance the significance of that decree of the 12th of December. He quickly resolved not to look idly on at the completion of his own ruin. Such an arbitrary return from his post would have ruined any one else, but he knew the forces on which he could reckon in Paris, and he hastened back to collect and animate them by his personal presence. On the 21st he met the complaints of the Lyonese in the Convention with proud superiority, denied the worst charges with a shameless brow, and vindicated the rest of his deeds as glorious acts of revolutionary justice. The Mountain, whose feelings had been wounded by Desmoulins, were favourably disposed towards him, and the Convention pronounced its entire approval of the measures adopted in Lyons. In the Jacobin club he assumed a far bolder tone. "Two months ago," cried he, "I left you burning with the thirst for righteous vengeance—to-day I scarcely recognise public opinion again; in three day's more I should have been impeached. Are you no longer the same? But no, you are not changed—you are still the friends of freedom, and the defenders of the people: to you I may speak the whole truth, and need not, as in the Convention, conceal myself in a mist of phrases." The Club remained silent, and did not venture to express an opinion, either by applause or disapprobation. When Hebert then rose to attack Bourdon, Desmoulins and Philippeaux, Collot's mighty influence was manifested: the club summoned them to answer for themselves, and solemnly declared its respect for Ronsin and Vincent. "What a piece of good fortune," wrote Hebert on the following day in the Père Duchesne "is this arrival of Collot, the faithful defender of the Sansculottes; the giant appears, and the dwarfs, who were about to harass the best patriots, creep away a hundred feet deep into the earth."

The fact that just at this time Toulon opened its gates to the Republican army, and the forces of the Vendéans

perished in a sea of blood, contributed not a little to strengthen the position of the extreme party. It was a new triumph of the existing system of government; it was a new reason for taking no other notice of the hatred of the population, than by adopting new measures of punishment and vengeance. Collot succeeded completely in enforcing his demands in the Committee of Public Safety. Billaud and Lindet's own inclinations made them ready for every terrorising measure; Carnot was still on bad terms with Robespierre, in consequence of the latter's continued jealousy of all that belonged to the army and military affairs;[1] and Barère gave way to the pressure of Collot, as he had done, four weeks before, to the wishes of Robespierre. The latter thus saw himself all at once outshone in the Committee, the Club and the Convention; saw the majority in the latter, and with it power and future success, secured to his opponents. The Jacobins attacked his allies; the Cordéliers presented stormy petitions in favour of Vincent; and the Convention, at a hint from Collot, ordered a speedy enquiry into the reasons of Ronsin's imprisonment. Robespierre treasured up these defeats in his memory as fuel for future revenge; but with regard to his immediate course, he did not hesitate for a moment in his resolution to go with the victorious party, at any sacrifice. This is perhaps the point of his whole political career at which his ambition shews itself most completely destitute of every honourable feeling—at which his cowardice was carried to the extreme of shameful meanness. Just a week after Ronsin's arrest he condescended publicly to proclaim in the Convention his conversion to the views of the Hebertists, and even to demand new victims for the persecuting fury of his old opponents.

The report which he brought up to the Convention, on the 25th, in the name of the Committee, was nominally an *exposé* of the general principles of revolutionary government.

[1] Conf. Nat. 6 Germinal III, evidence of Bourdon, Carnot and Levasseur.

"A constitutional government," he said "protects freedom, a revolutionary government fights for it; the former exists in a state of peace, the latter in a state of war; the former can allow individual citizens to do as they please, but the latter must concentrate all its force for the overthrow of factions." He then pourtrayed the two opposing parties of the "moderates" and the "over-zealous," just as he had done in his report of the 17th of November. But as, on the former occasion, he did not hesitate to make this dilemma the prelude to an attack upon the Hebertists, so he now declared with equal violence, that if one must choose between the two, excess of patriotism was better than the absolute want of it. "Let us beware," he cried, "of destroying patriotism in the hope of healing it. We have seen that directly some necessary measures were adopted against the over-zealous, all the partisans of the ancient tyranny, with the traitors of Lyons at their head, came forward to calumniate all genuine and ardent patriots." He concluded by proposing a decree, which sent to the revolutionary Tribunal General Biron, a son of Custine, and all who belonged to Houchard's staff; and he demanded for this court a more powerful organisation, and a more expeditious mode of procedure.

On the 26th it came to Barère's turn to recant, and he was, moreover, charged with a motion designed to inflict fresh humiliation on Robespierre. He spoke in the name of the two Government Committees against Robespierre's decree of the 20th, which ordered an enquiry, for the purpose of finding out those who had been unjustly arrested. With loud complaints of the indulgence lately shown to the aristocracy, and a condemnatory reference to Desmoulin's "*Vieux Cordélier*," he launched out in praise of the law concerning *suspects*, and proposed to leave the examination of the impugned cases to a section of the Committee of Public Safety. Robespierre could not suppress a feeble protest against this direct reproof; but Billaud told him that all the

faults belonged to the first decree, which, he said, had been extorted from the Convention in a moment of weakness. The decree of the 20th was thereupon annulled, and no provision was thought necessary in favour of those who had been innocently imprisoned. The system of terror maintained its ground; those who thought that the people ought not to be driven to rebellion by utter despair were entirely routed by the partisans of extermination and annihilation.

The victors now thought of nothing but revenge for the dangers they had just escaped; and the Dantonists, who had lately hoped to ruin their hated enemies, now saw themselves attacked on every side. The so-called purification of the Jacobin club afforded the first and most convenient theatre for a cross-fire of mutual accusations, which raged all the more furiously, because it was well known that exclusion from the club would place the rejected party on the list of *suspects*, and consequently on the direct road to prison and the scaffold. For a time fortune wavered in the odious strife, and the two parties inflicted mutual defeats on each other. But in January Collot's influence continually gained ground, and the defeat of Bourdon, Philippeaux and Desmoulins, became every day more certain. The attitude which Robespierre assumed in the midst of this mortal strife was extremely singular. He was not so entirely trodden under foot by his rivals, as not to take every opportunity of manifesting his contempt for the Hebertists; but he clothed it in general expressions of grief at the party feuds, which, he said, ought to be sacrificed to the great interests of their common country. From this point of view he endeavoured to moderate the violence of the charges brought against the Dantonists, and continued to shew a certain affection for the friend of his youth, Camille Desmoulins. But even in this case he brought himself publicly to deny the part he had taken in "*le vieux Cordélier*," and even to propose that this journal should be burned in the Jacobin club. When Camille, in the coolest manner, called him to account

for this, he grew angry, and expressed his high displeasure that the stiff-necked sinner should be blind to the generosity of a proposal to punish him with such fatherly mildness. Towards the other associates of Danton he had no other sentiment than wrath at having been brought into his present critical position by his compliance with their wishes: this feeling was directed, of course, most strongly against those whom he had previously hated, Dubois-Crancé, Merlin of Thionville, Bourdon and Philippeaux, and above all the real author of the league—Fabre d'Eglantine. He wished in fact to destroy the latter, if it were only to stop the mouth of one who knew so much; and, as we may suppose, Collot and Billaud entirely concurred with him in this purpose. The Dantonists themselves hastened the execution of this intention, by continuing their attacks upon the War Ministry, even after the defection of Robespierre, and by occasionally directing their blows even against the Committee of Public Safety, for its change of policy. On the 7th of January, 1794, Bourdon, in the midst of other charges, began a discussion concerning the money spent by Bouchotte on the "*Père Duchesne*;" and by the help of Danton succeeded in passing a decree that for the future no Minister should receive money from the Treasury without an express order from the Convention. Under existing circumstances, the Committee of Public Safety declared this attack upon the ministers to be an act of hostility against themselves, and hastened, in the next sitting, to obtain a revocation of the decree: but, at the same time, they resolved to proceed without further delay against Fabre, whom they, too, considered as the real author of the plot. On the 8th, Robespierre overwhelmed him in the Jacobin club with a flood of general charges, to which Fabre replied by calling upon him to specify the offences imputed to him. Four days afterwards Amar announced to the Convention that Fabre had tampered with the decree against the India Company—which he himself had brought forward in opposition

to Delaunai and Chabot—in favour of those swindlers, and had therefore been arrested. Danton vainly endeavoured to have Fabre brought to the bar of the Convention, and examined on the charges. Vadier, in the *Comité de Sûreté générale*, made a violent reply; and when Danton thereupon ventured to ask that a more circumstantial report of Fabre's proceedings should be brought up without delay, Billaud cried out, that to fix a time for the report, would be to suppress a case which deserved to be made as widely known as possible. "Woe to him," he said, "who has sat by Fabre's side, and yet believes in his innocence: I demand that sufficient time be given to the Committee for a complete investigation of these criminal intrigues." Danton could not doubt that he himself would find a place in that report by the side of his persecuted friends: Desmoulins said "*La Convention est en coupe reglée*, we shall all have our turn." The Committee, however, could not as yet make up its mind to so hazardous a step as a direct attack upon Danton's person. Robespierre was secretly engaged on his report concerning Fabre, in which he abused the insinuating malice of that unfathomable *intriguant*, and, without mentioning Danton and Camille, denounced Bourdon, Philippeaux, Merlin and Dubois, as Fabre's accomplices. But either because his statements found no favour for some other reasons, or because the Committee, did not choose to end the affair without overthrowing Danton, the draft was not adopted, and Fabre was kept in the closest separate confinement until further orders. It was strictly in accordance with these proceedings, that Vincent, Ronsin and Maillard, were soon afterwards liberated, without any enquiry into the charges brought against than. Robespierre took no part in the discussion on this point; he remained for the present in his observant position, and made the greatest exertions to recover his preponderance among the Jacobins. He spent several hours with them every evening, spoke incessantly, got the better of every other speaker, and sur-

passed himself in revolutionary zeal and patriotic public spirit. On the 5th of February he delivered in the Convention, too, one of those long treatises, by which he loved to give his political aims a theoretical basis, and which he this time threw into the shape of a report, as he called it, on the principles of political morality which ought to guide the French government. With regard to the theory, his treatise contained rather a wordy exposition of the dicta of Montesquieu and Rousseau—that political virtue consists in public spirit, and, consequently, can only be perfectly developed in a republican constitution, for the success of which, the extermination of crime by terrible severity is absolutely essential. With regard to the actual state of affairs at the moment, he still preserved his late attitude of neutrality between the parties, by rejecting both the over-zealous and the moderates—the Hebertists and the Dantonists—with equal decision: but he subsequently allowed it to be seen, as he had previously done on the 25th of December, that the Government, at that time, regarded the Dantonists as their real opponents. "They would like," he said, "to guide the Revolution according to legal niceties, and decide, in cases of conspiracy against the State, in the same way as in private law-suits. They first tried to calumniate the Committee of Public Safety itself, until its triumphs closed the mouth of its opponents. Since then they have tried another means—that of crippling it in the midst of high-flown compliments, and destroying the fruits of all its labours. All these complaints against the necessary instruments of the Committee[1]—all the disturbing schemes which they call reforms—all this zeal in praising the *intriguants* whom the Committee has been obliged to remove from the public service[2]—

[1] Bouchotte and his associates. — [2] Tunq and Westermann. The latter, too, was deposed immediately after his victories in La Vendée, but was subsequently praised in the Convention on the 7th.

this weak indulgence towards traitors[1]—this entire system of deceit and intrigue, the chief author of which is a man whom you have just expelled[2]—all these things are concocted against the Convention, and are carried out in league with all the enemies of France."

Only two months had passed since Robespierre, in union with Fabre, had resolved to direct these same attacks against the Hebertists. Fabre and Hebert were just the same as they had been in November, but strength and victory had passed to the other side, since Collot's return. This was sufficient to induce Robespierre unscrupulously to direct a criminal charge against his former associate. But the long list of his acts of meanness was not yet closed.

At the first moment he gained but little by this abandonment of his convictions. Two days after his report in the club, he had sharply rebuffed two Hebertists of a lower order, named Brichet and Saintex, and had had them expelled from the society as traitors in disguise. During the next night, all the corners of the streets in Paris were covered with placards, which, in the most violent terms, pourtrayed Robespierre to the people as an ambitious tyrant. Under existing circumstances he was unable to procure immediate satisfaction; and for many years he had never suffered so great a humiliation within his own party. It had such an effect upon him, that he was ill for several weeks, and took no part either in the club or in the Convention.[3] Collot thereby obtained a clear field among the Jacobins, and used his time in enlarging his influence in that mighty popular association into exclusive power.

About this time St. Just returned to Paris from a new "*mission*" in Flanders. He had left the capital four months before, and therefore found the relation of affairs essentially

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[1] In the case of Camille Desmoulins and the "Old Cordelier." — [2] Fabre d'Eglantine. — [3] Mallet du Pan, Mémoires II, 66.

altered. He had always been a warm admirer of Robespierre, but he was without doubt superior to his master in the power of taking a rapid resolution at the proper moment; and this was evidently necessary in the present crisis, if Robespierre's influence was not for ever to fall between the two parties. St. Just had no intention of giving up his post in favour of any Hebertist; he was quite agreed with Robespierre as to the necessity of reducing the masses of contending democrats to submission and discipline; thus far, therefore, he sympathised with the movement begun, in October, by the Committee of Public Safety against the disorders of the Parisian mob, and the arbitrary madness of the Provincial commissioners. But he was all the less inclined, on that account, to hear of any indulgence towards the aristocrats and egoists, of humanity towards the arrested and suspected, or of justice towards an infinite majority of the French people. On these points his sympathies were entirely with Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes, and he rejected the Dantonists all the more unreservedly, because he had exchanged personal insults with several of their leaders, and never forgot a personal quarrel. It is said that he refused satisfaction to his colleague Herault after a quarrel over their cups, and that the latter had thereupon treated him as a coward and threatened to kick him. Camille Desmoulins, again, had said in a number of his journal; "The young Tribune, in the consciousness of his own importance, bears his head upon his shoulders with as much dignity as if it were the Holy Sacrament;" whereupon St. Just cried out: "He shall one day carry his under his arm, like St. Dionysius." If, therefore, Robespierre was still bound to Desmoulins by a remnant of youthful affection, St. Just was not inclined, in this case, to refuse anything to the vengeance of the Hebertists.

The part which he intended to take in the strife of factions was seen immediately after his return, on the 26th of February, when he brought up a report in the name of the two

Government committees, concerning the treatment of the *suspects*. Ever since the Dantonists had made themselves the mouth-piece of the general sympathy felt for those who had been arbitrarily arrested, scarcely a day passed without a discussion on the subject. Subsequently to Collot's return there were no more of those qualms of mercy which we noticed in December; on the contrary, the principle was publicly laid down in the Convention and without opposition: "That to exercise indulgence towards the enemies of the Revolution was to murder the patriots." The leaders of the Mountain, as we see, perfectly understood their position: it was evident to them that they could only rescue their own lives by threatening all differences of opinion with death. They could not condemn their system more emphatically than by the acknowledgment of this fact: they were well aware of this, and the consciousness only spurred them on to a further extension of their tyranny. We shall presently see in what a state of depression the finances were at this time; it was now that the question was raised, whether the law concerning the *suspects* might not be turned to the advantage of the Treasury; and, on the 26th of January, Couthon caused the two Government committees to be commissioned to report, within three days, what advantages the confiscation of the goods of all suspected persons might bring to the Republic. To the property of the Church, which had been confiscated by the Constituent Assembly, and to the possessions of the *Emigrés*, which had been confiscated by the Legislative Assembly, a third prize of no less magnitude, was now to be added. It was at that time a question of the property of about 200,000 persons, the number of which, as we know, could be arbitrarily increased at any moment, as it was in the unlimited power of every revolutionary Committee, to imprison any rich or obnoxious citizen as a suspected person.[1] Enticing as this colossal

[1] Conf. Oudot's report. Conf. Nat. 1st November 1894.

booty was, the proposal lay unfinished for several weeks among the papers of the Committee of Public Safety, until St. Just once more interfered, and took it in hand with all the haughty severity of his character. He did not hesitate a moment about the confiscation of the lands; "Let the property of patriots," he said, "be sacred, but let the goods of the aristocrats fall to the Republic, to pay the expenses of the war which they have kindled." He contemplated taking possession of the persons of his opponents on the same principle, and employing the *suspects* in compulsory labour on the roads and in the fortresses: but this was a little too much even for his colleagues in the Committee, and St. Just was obliged, very reluctantly, to give up his useful proposition. The Convention, however, resolved on the 26th, in accordance with his motion, that the *suspects* should remain under arrest till the peace, and then be banished for ever; but that their goods should be immediately seized and employed in providing for poor patriots.

This last provision, which seemed to make over the booty not to the *fiscus* but to the proletaries, was, as we need hardly remark, of the greatest importance to the cause of the democratic parties. The material condition of the people was worse than ever; in spite of all grants and loans the provisioning of Paris came to a standstill in every direction; the Government had been obliged to mitigate the law against *accaparement*, and to bring the wages of labour also under the regulations of the great *maximum* tariff. The poorer classes, therefore, had matter enough for discontent and agitation, and the Hebertists of the Municipality reckoned not a little on their dissatisfaction, in case of a new revolutionary movement. But by the law of the 26th this instrument of agitation was wrested from their hands. The proletaries greeted the Committee of Public Safety with greedy thanks for having opened a prospect to them of such an unheard-of change in the distribution of property, and rallied with devotion round a government which could at

will change every beggar into a *rentier*. This law, therefore, though conceived entirely in the spirit of the Hebertists, was nevertheless an annihilating blow for the personal influence of Hebert and his associates.

To the party of the moderates, on the other hand, it proclaimed the victory of communistic principles, and afforded a new proof that Collot's system had been adopted by Robespierre and his friends. This is what St. Just had intended, and what he proclaimed without reserve in the accompanying report. Threat succeeded threat, in this document, against the moderates; he plainly reckoned them amongst those enemies of the Revolution "to spare whom would be to murder the patriots." "We must no longer look on," he cried, "in silence at the impunity of the greatest criminals, who are only trying to break down the scaffold, because they have before them the prospect of mounting it themselves." Danton did not venture to reply, although no one any longer doubted how closely these words applied to him. He had been silent when Barère, shortly before, had pronounced judgment in the Convention against the foreign policy which aimed at peace, which, he said, was still treacherously recommended by the moderate party—the same policy which Barère, in Danton's reign, had for months advocated and carried out as a diligent coadjutor; Danton had kept silence when Barère, in striking contrast to Robespierre's report of the 17th of November, declared war indispensable to the weal of the State—perpetual war against all the tyrants of the earth; and he was silent even now, when his opponents directed personal threats against him. It seemed to him incredible that Robespierre was plotting against him and seeking his blood, in league with Collot d'Herbois, after having so lately begged his help against the latter and his partisans. He did not remember that he had been Robespierre's opponent for almost a year, and that the abortive alliance had naturally increased the latter's hatred tenfold.

And besides this, he saw no remedy in the state of things around him, and felt no energy in his own mind. And thus he remained, half disbelieving and half expecting his approaching fate, completely inactive in the face of danger.

In this position of affairs the Committee of Public Safety, separated from the parties and raised above them both, might, perhaps, have left them for a time to themselves. But the decision came from an unexpected quarter. The Hebertists in the Municipality and in the War Ministry had but little pleasure in the triumph of their principles, because it did not in any way conduce to their personal advantage. The Committee might rage ever so violently against the *suspects*, might deprive the citizens of their property, and promise it to the proletaries, might issue numerous enactments which the Hebertists were accustomed to praise as the essence of freedom: but still the law of the 4th of December existed; Chaumette and Hebert still continued to be subordinate communal officials, and Vincent and Ronsin subordinate State servants, without influence on the government, watched in all their attempts to enrich themselves, and liable to be called to strict account. As lately as the 12th of February Hebert had told the Cordéliers that not only the moderates, but the tribe of bombastic orators who had invented for him the name of an ultra-revolutionist—i. e. Robespierre and his followers—must be got rid of. But instead of this, Couthon and St. Just now acted, it is true, entirely in accordance with Collot's views, but in return they shared in Collot's power, and made the Hebertists feel the weight of government authority sometimes in one way and sometimes in another. Thus Javoques, an old friend of Hebert's, was summoned from Lyons to Paris to answer for the abuse which he had uttered against Couthon; and at the end of February, Carrier himself, at Nantes, was made to feel the anger of the Committee, and was recalled to the Convention at the instigation of Robespierre for having ill-treated, not only

catholics and royalists, but good patriots. It is true that Collot introduced him to the Parisian Jacobins with loud praises, but nevertheless he filled the Club of the Cordéliers, where Hebert and Vincent were in the ascendant, with impetuous and noisy complaints. They all thought it was high time for a revolt. In fact, the best of their previous supporters were wavering. Since the 26th they could no longer reckon on the proletariate for the advancement of their personal objects. The revolutionary army, too, which was full of their supporters, was dispersed by the Committee, who continually sent detachments of them into the Departments, so that at that time scarcely three thousand remained in the capital. Under these circumstances the Cordéliers heard, on the 4th of March, that one of their members, named Marchand, had been arrested by the revolutionary Committee of his section for using too great licence of speech. Then the long pent-up agitation broke loose; they sent to the *Comité de Sûreté générale* to demand the immediate liberation of the prisoner, and at their next sitting, on the 5th, they ordered that the tablet of the "Rights of Man" should be covered with black crape until the oppressed people should regain its freedom. Carrier thereupon exhorted them not to content themselves with words; insurrection, he said, sacred insurrection, was the only means of curbing the criminals. Hebert supported him with curses against the Ministers Paré, Desforgues, and Destournelles—against Philippeaux and Bourdon—against the seventy-three imprisoned Deputies—whom, he said, nothing but traitorous ambition protected from the guillotine. "Speak, Father Duchesne," cried a general of the revolutionary army, "speak away, and the rest of us will fight."

But they soon learned that since December the power with which they had once overthrown the Gironde had escaped from their hands. Vincent had observed long faces, even in the Club itself, during the summons to rebellion; in the city the proletaries looked only to the Committee of

Public Safety; among the citizens there was but one voice of derision and disgust against Hebert and his associates. Nay, even the great Municipal Council received their declaration, that they were preparing to exterminate all the enemies of the people, with irresolute hesitation. At the decisive moment their military leader, Henriot, deserted to Robespierre;[1] and on arriving at the Jacobin club Carrier was obliged to stammer out a declaration that the Cordéliers had only contemplated insurrection *under certain circumstances*. In a word the revolution of the Hebertists died of exhaustion at the moment of its birth. Humbly and tremblingly they retraced their steps; allowed themselves to be reproved by a deputation of Jacobins led by Collot, and thundered against the calumniators who wanted to lay at their door the guilt of rebellion against Convention and Committee. But all this availed them nothing: they had furnished their enemies with a destructive weapon against themselves.

There exists no well accredited account of the deliberations of the Committee of Public Safety during these decisive days, but the position of affairs and the known results are sufficient to exclude all doubts respecting the course of their proceedings. After the Hebertists had betrayed their own weakness, Robespierre demanded their annihilation, and Collot d'Herbois was the less able to save them, because his former connexion with them might expose him to the suspicion of having taken part in their unfortunate attempt. As a set

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[1] Lévasseur, *Mémoires*, III, 40. This book in its present form is apocryphal, since a certain Achille Roche has expanded one volume of Levasseur's notes into four thick volumes (of which, by the way, Louis Blanc takes as little notice as he does of the spuriousness of Hardenberg's *Mémoires*). There is however no reason to doubt of the correctness of the statement given above, since Henriot was notoriously at an earlier period an associate of Hebert, and subsequently an adherent of Robespierre.

off, however, he and his friends demanded with redoubled energy a final decision respecting the Dantonists, who—as had been proved—might be more dangerous to the Committee in the Convention, than Hebert or Vincent in the streets; and who for the last year had followed a distinct and obstructive policy of their own, and had deeply offended the most irritable of the present rulers. Robespierre, it is said,[1] flew out violently when Danton's name was first mentioned; but at any rate he did not maintain his opposition long. He stood alone in the Committee on this question; he had never liked Danton, and he saw the incalculable advantage which the fall of the Hebertists must bring him. It is certain that the Committee came to an agreement with respect to this grand double sacrifice within twenty-four hours. On the 6th of March Barère brought up a report to the Convention on the intrigues against the Republic which had been brought to light in different parts of the country—in Lille, Havre, Maubeuge, Landrecies, and above all at Paris—by seditious placards and bread riots, all of which were got up by Pitt and Coburg, but which would be prosecuted step by step by the Committee of Public Safety. He would not, he said, make any further disclosures, since St. Just was commissioned to do this at an early day; but meantime he demanded full powers for the public accuser of the revolutionary Tribunal to prosecute the authors of those intrigues, and to bring up a report upon them to the Convention within three days. This was done: on the 9th this officer, Fouquier Tinville, gave some information respecting the printed bills posted up in Paris. But it was St. Just who spoke the decisive word, on the 13th, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. His report, it is true, mentioned no names, but it left little room for doubt. He most distinctly denounced the two factions, separated only in appearance, who formed the great

[1] Billaud, Conv. Nat. 9, Therm. II.

conspiracy of the Foreign Powers—the spurious imitators of Marat, and the cruel philanthropists. He declared that they were all unmasked and surrounded, hemmed in on every side; and he caused every one to be declared worthy of death, who should plot against the power of the Convention or the revolutionary government—or spread discontent respecting the necessaries of life—or afford an asylum to *Emigrés*, or neglect to inform against a conspirator—or favour the seduction of the citizens and the corruption of public opinion. Under one or other of these categories every political opponent, without exception, might be brought, and thereby doomed to destruction.

The first flash of the gathering storm fell on the heads of the Hebertists. Hebert, Vincent, Ronsin, Desfieux, Proli, and fifteen others, were arrested in the same night and handed over to the revolutionary Tribunal: a day later the same fate befel the Procureur of the Municipality, in whose stead Robespierre immediately carried the appointment of a man named Payan, who was entirely devoted to his person. The official head of the Commune, the Mayor Pache, was regarded as so submissive, and Bouchotte, the Minister of War, so insignificant, that they were both spared for the moment. But on the 16th Amar appeared in the Convention with articles of impeachment against Chabot, Bazire, Delaunai, and the most hated of all the Dantonists, Fabre d'Eglantine. This faction was still more openly threatened on the 17th, when St. Just brought a criminal charge against Herault-Sechelles of having received an *Emigré* into his house, in defiance of the law of the 13th. Herault was himself a member of the Committee of Public Safety; it was evident that he must first be driven from the seat of power, before the *coup de grace* was given to his political associates.

The consternation which this approach of danger caused among the Dantonists was immense; but they were all so thoroughly intimidated, that not one of them dared to move,

or to expose himself to danger by any token of sympathy with the victims. They all remained quiet and silent. The minds of men in Paris were thoroughly occupied by the proceedings against the Hebertists: the citizens were highly delighted that the monsters who had hurled millions into misery were now overtaken by a just retribution, and the mobs whom Hebert himself had accustomed to brutality and bloodshed, saw his head fall beneath the axe, with the same indifference as that of any other victim. He was completely unmanned and beside himself with terror, and wept like a child, falling into one fainting fit after another; while his friend Ronsin preserved his cold composure, and prophesied speedy vengeance on the authors of his misery. After three days' discussion they were executed on the 24th amidst a vast and rejoicing concourse of people. As an immediate consequence of their fall, the Convention ordered, on the 25th, that the revolutionary army—which had been set on foot by them, and was entirely filled by their spirit—should be entirely disbanded.

Meanwhile the Committee of Public Safety was eager to bring these complications to a close by the destruction of the Dantonists. They were agreed on the main point, but at the last moment a difficulty arose in fixing upon individual names. Robespierre was influenced partly by St. Just and Billaud, and partly by opinions of an opposite character. It was Tallien, especially, who had lately returned from Bordeaux—a friend of Danton from the time of the September massacres, and therefore personally attached to him, but thoroughly averse to the system of clemency—who once more made an attempt at reconciliation, and brought about a personal meeting between Danton and Robespierre. It had no result: Robespierre reproached him for still supporting Camille and Philippeaux, and therefore being a conspirator. Danton burst into tears. "The proud man weeps," said Robespierre, and turned contemptuously away. A certain Pâris, one of the secretaries of the revolutionary Tribunal,

brought about a second conference between them, which was still shorter than the first. "The royalists must certainly fall," observed Danton, "but we must strike no innocent person." "Who told you," replied Robespierre, "that any innocent person had been put to death?" "Do you hear, Pâris," cried Danton, "no guiltless person has perished"—and with that he left the room without another word. He then told his friends that it was time for them to shew themselves, but at the first mention of a more definite plan he relapsed into his brooding listlessness. Probably about the same moment the Committee had decided upon its list; Robespierre now abandoned Camille Desmoulins to his fate, and was so firm in his resolution respecting Danton, that after signing his sentence of death on the 30th of March, he took an excursion with him beyond the barriéres, as he had often done in better times, and brought him back in his own carriage, as if he had been an intimate friend. On the evening of the 31st Lacroix, Philippeaux, Westermann and Desmoulins were arrested: Danton being informed of this and advised to flee cried again and again, "They will not dare!" and in this state of mind the executioners of the *Comité de Sûreté générale* found him.

The impression produced in Paris was indescribable. Many had seen these events approaching, but no one had regarded them as possible; every one was now astounded to stupefaction, and scarcely dared to consider the causes, and still less the consequences, of such a catastrophe. Never had the sittings of the revolutionary Tribunal been attended by such a crowded audience; even the jurors trembled at Danton's violent and threatening outbursts, in which he sometimes demanded the presence of the whole Convention, and sometimes claimed to be brought face to face with his accusers, and incessantly invoked the sympathy of the nation with his thundering and far-resounding voice. All his friends refused and defence, until their witnesses had all answer been summoned and their documentary evidence collected;

the agitation among the audience who listened to Danton's words in the Hall, and at the windows, and even from the other side of the Seine, hourly increased. At last St. Just obtained an order from the Convention which empowered the Tribunal, in case of obstinate resistance on the part of the accused, to pass immediate sentence. Thereupon a sentence of death was at once pronounced, and on the 4th of April the author of the storming of the Bastille, the originator of the September massacres, the conqueror of La Vendée, and the prosecutor of its enemies, suffered death in the same hour.

Nine days afterwards Chaumette and some of the most atrocious agents of the revolutionary army met the same fate; and with them the widows of both Hebert and Desmoulins, the latter's friend General Dillon, and the deputy Simon, as an associate of Herault—in all twenty-five persons, who had incurred their fate from the arbitrary hatred of individual rulers, and suffered under the general charge of conspiracy with foreigners. All those who during the last few months had in any way shown aversion to the Committee of Public Safety were struck down by these blows. "The political horizon," cried Couthon on the 1st of April, "is clearing up, the sky is becoming bright, and the Republic is rising triumphantly from the midst of dangers." The most important of his enemies slept in the grave; the few who, like Carrier and Fouché on the one side, and Bourdon and Legendre on the other, had been saved by influential intervention, were completely broken and filled with a crouching fear of death. The Convention, which up to that time had not easily denied anything to the powerful voice of Danton, showed a cringing obedience to the rulers of the Committee; and the chief seat of Hebert's influence, the War Ministry, had fallen with Vincent and Ronsin. On the 1st of April the Convention, on Carnot's motion, decreed the entire abolition of the Council of Ministers, and oppointed in its stead twelve Committees,

none of which had a sufficiently important sphere of action to be able to oppose its independent will to that of the Committee of Public Safety.

And thus the Committee was now in possession of unlimited power over the Convention, the State, and the People. Of its own members Robespierre no doubt had carried off the lion's share of the booty. But lately driven into a dangerous corner, he had been rescued by the ill-advised attempts of the Hebertists. While, in the Convention, the relative power exercised by himself and Collot was scarcely at all affected by Danton's execution, he was freed, in the city, from his most dangerous enemies by their own fault; and Collot was at the same time deprived of his sturdy and devoted followers. This soon became evident on the 6th of April, when Couthon announced that during the next few days the Committee would lay before the Convention an important report on political morality, on the objects of the war, and on the worship of an eternal God; whose image, he said, the Hebertists had not been able to tear from the hearts of the people. These were all characteristic cant phrases from Robespierre's former system, to which he now brought back the Committee with a powerful hand. He might justly regard himself as the man of the future, as the next master of the French government.

But in this, in all respects, victorious position, he shewed no signs of triumphant joy. Robespierre's consciousness of being actual possessor of the whole power of the State seemed to have no other effect upon him than that of making him feel that he was the principal object of the nation's hatred, and inducing him to guard his life by precautions of every kind. A number of strong and trustworthy men had been for a long time accustomed to sleep on the ground-floor of his house, and to accompany him whenever he went out, armed with heavy sticks. It was now observed that he had two pistols near his plate at every meal, and that he never touched any dish until

others had tasted of it before him. He knew what a deep hatred divided the members of the Supreme Council—himself and Carnot, Collot and Couthon, St. Just and Barère—from one another, and that each of them saw in the life of the other a threatening danger to his own. He knew that they were all viewed with abhorrence by the French people; that every execution of an opponent diminished the number of their friends; and that far and wide through the land there was no stronger feeling than the desire of liberation. In Paris itself the number of prisoners had risen within four weeks from 5,000 to 6,000, and yet there was not a Section whose meetings did not require to be watched with a jealous eye by the police. The Bourgeois population, overpowered in open fight, stripped of all means of existence, daily threatened in person and in property, incessantly and everywhere opposed to the Government the only weapon which remained to them—silent yet evident hatred of the deadliest kind.

The spring was now approaching, in which warlike operations had again to be commenced. If splendid laurels were ripening on this field to compensate the nation for their sufferings at home, the prospects of the Government, even in this direction, were gloomy and unsatisfactory in the extreme. If their Generals were victorious in the coming campaign, if the leaders of such colossal armies could display themselves in warlike glory in the eyes of the people, then it seemed to Robespierre's eye, sharpened as it was by anxiety, that he should be immediately crushed by the weight of public execration, that the tyranny of the popular Tribune would sink at once before the sword of the military hero.[1] Consequently, one of the first measures taken after the unsuccessful rising of the Hebertists was that

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[1] Billaud Conv. Nat. 20th April. — Moris's, despatches to Jefferson 13th of March, 10th of April. — So also Louis Blanc VI, 223. "*Robespierre voyait venir Napoléon.*"

St. Just removed General Hoche—the ablest, boldest, and most suspected of all the officers who had hitherto commanded—first from the Moselle Army, and then into close confinement in Paris. It was with difficulty that Carnot prevented for the present his being brought before the revolutionary Tribunal.

Such were the anxieties of the Parisian rulers in case their armies should be victorious. But if they should suffer defeats, or gain only imperfect or indecisive victories? France had, as we have seen, raised enormous forces, but the Government well knew what sacrifices these armaments had cost the country, how much strength and property had been squandered to no purpose, and how simply impossible it was to carry on such a system for more than a single campaign. "We must," said Carnot, "gain great and overpowering advantages within the next few months; a moderate victory would bury the Republic in ruins." [1]

These affairs, however, demand a closer investigation. It is these to which we must first direct our attention in order to see in a proper light the European catastrophes of 1794.

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[1] Carnot to Choudieu, 18th March, *Depôt de la guerre*, Paris.

BOOK IX.

VICTORIES OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

FRENCH PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

Recruiting in France.—New organisation of the army.—Expenditure of the war department.—Training of the troops.—Strength of the French armies.—Carnot.—Diplomatic conduct and general plan of the war.—Carnot's plans for the campaign.

Ever since September, 1793, France had lain under the weight of that organised mob which sent its agents into the smallest villages of the land, exercised an absolute dominion over the persons and lives of the citizens, counted its victims by thousands, and its booty by millions, and soon turned its fury against its own members with the same cruelty as the rest of the population. On every frontier of France war was being waged with the Powers of Europe, and the Committee of Public Safety was resolved for a thousand reasons to carry on the contest without let or limit. In spite of all the robberies committed by the Government, the Treasury grew poorer with the impoverishment of the plundered nation; and to provide the means of existence at home it was necessary to look out for foreign booty. In spite of the terror which they inspired, the ruling party deeply felt the growing abhorrence of the citizens, and thought it advisable to send them away with all speed to the armies, to tame them by military discipline, and to remove them to the borders, and beyond the borders. In spite of the divisions in the camp of the Allies, the

authors of the September massacres regarded peace with the rest of the world as impossible; they felt that they must annihilate their enemies, if they would not themselves rush to certain ruin. They therefore collected all the resources of their land—men and property, ideas and weapons, blood and treasure—by infinite and unsparing exertions, in order to flood the countries of old Europe on every side with an irresistible stream.

We have had occasion to observe all that had been done for a similar purpose in the earlier periods of the Revolution. To the army of 150,000 men which was gathered on the frontier in the spring of 1792, the desire of opposing the attack of the Prussians had added 100,000 volunteers. On the breaking out of the war with England a conscription of 300,000 was decreed; and lastly, on the 23rd August, all males between 18 and 25 years of age were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to march. In those Departments which were immediately affected by the war—namely, the districts bordering on Alsace, Flanders, La Vendée, Lyons and Toulon—the levy *en masse*, as we have seen, was actually carried out. All who were capable of bearing arms in those quarters, whether well or ill armed, with or without maintenance pay or instruction, were obliged to repair to the camps; so that in this tumultuous way at least 150,000 men were driven to the standards. But it soon became evident how many lives were uselessly wasted by these hasty and foolish proceedings, and every effort was now made to arrange the new recruits in some serviceable and military order. It might be assumed that in the population of France, at that period, about 120,000 men attained the military age every year; the law of the 23rd of August summoned eight such contingents to the field; and thus, after subtracting those who were already in the regiments, a mass of 500,000 recruits might be looked for. If we likewise consider that the Royalists of La Vendée

and the cities of the South had at least 150,000 men under arms during the autumn, we shall find that the French government, in the year 1793, drove more than a million of their strongest men into the turmoil of a war which daily grew more bloody.

Gigantic as these exertions were, the State was far from gaining the whole advantage of them for the purpose it had in view. When the levy of the 23rd of August was ordered, the Hebertists were at the summit of their political power, and were filled with hatred and suspicion against all the existing military regulations. It had, indeed, been decreed ever since February, that all soldiers should be made volunteers, that the battalions of the two forces should be united in semi-brigades, and their officers elected by the men thus united. But in the face of an enemy advancing with superior numbers, such a disruption of the old regimental system seemed to the generals and the Dantonist Committee of Public Safety quite too hazardous, and the execution of the decree was therefore suspended. After the renewal of the Committee, the order for the union of volunteer and troops of the line was immediately repeated on the 12th of August. But just at that time not a moment could be lost in saving Dunkirk, in covering Alsace, and surrounding the Vendeans; it was impossible therefore to think of making any radical changes in the organization of the army, and the hated and dreaded regiments of the line continued to exist with their aristocratic officers and staff. Bouchotte, the Minister-at-War was, however, determined on no consideration to subject the new recruits to these evil influences; he therefore ordered that the Communes should manage the conscription, that the recruits of every district should be collected into a battalion in the chief town, choose their officers and non-commissioned officers from among themselves according to their need, and then, after receiving their arms, march to the frontiers as a ready

made division. We have already become acquainted with the character of the communal authorities of that period—the degree of their education and the nature of their opinions—and we may easily judge with what an amount of zeal tumult and confusion they carried on their preparations. Popular commissioners, clubs, and revolutionary committees, everywhere interfered by word and deed, and it was only the dictatorial authority of the members of Convention who happened to be present, which rendered the formation of the battalions possible. The political developement had made such progress that the strictest obedience to the commands of the Government and the Conventional Commissioners was enjoined upon the troops on pain of immediate death; while on the other hand suspicion against their officers, hatred against the aristocrats, and notions of freedom and equality, were disseminated among them with equal zeal. The new battalions endeavoured to make themselves acquainted as well as they could with the use of their weapons and military drill; but from the want of skilful officers the progress made was extremely slow; so that the Convention, as early as the 27th of September, ordained that the citizens of the new levy should relieve the garrisons of the fortresses, while the latter repaired to their respective armies. But the discipline and obedience of the troops under the newly-elected officers was no less deficient than their military training; the men, who had for the most part joined the army with great reluctance, could not be brought into anything like military order, and soon melted away under the hands of their leaders by constant desertion. Those who remained wished at any rate not to serve as privates; the new battalions, therefore, arbitrarily increased the number of commissions, and thus it came to pass, that at the end of October the Government learnt to their dismay, that they would for the future have to pay 260,000 officers and non-commissioned officers.

This decided them to make a complete change in their system by issuing the new and comprehensive law of the 22nd of November.

According to this enactment, the mixed semi-brigades, on their arrival at the different armies, were to be formed into three battalions each, one of the Line and two of Volunteers; the number of these was to be raised to 210, and the already existing disciplined troops used as a nucleus for them; the battalions of the new levy were to be all broken up, and the men belonging to them enrolled in the semi-brigades as privates, without any regard to their previous rank. Whoever resisted this change was to be incarcerated as a suspected person; and whoever endeavoured to evade his duty was to be treated as a mutineer and shot.

This arrangement, according to which the semi-brigade was fixed at 3,200 men, ought, when completed, to have yielded a force of 672,000 infantry. The cavalry, the formation of which was rendered very difficult by the deeply felt want of horses, was to be raised to 90,000 men. With this view all the horses of private persons throughout the country were seized in August, and in October eight horses were demanded from every canton. But in consequence of the utter ruin of agriculture and cattle breeding, the result of these measures was far from coming up to the expectations of the Government; and all the violence with which individual commissioners sometimes seized several hundred horses at once, in the same place, could not mend the matter. Equal zeal was manifested in the casting of cannon, the formation of batteries, and the collection of means of transport and munitions of war. The manufactories of arms at Paris, subsidised by the Government with millions after millions, were gradually enabled to furnish as many as a thousand muskets a day; and a process was invented of employing bell-metal as a material for casting ordinance. The Government assumed to itself the disposal of all the

soil containing saltpetre, and it soon became a patriotic fashion among the more zealous or obedient citizens, to dig up their cellars in search of this precious salt. There seemed no danger that the troops should want sustenance or clothing, since whatever they needed was simply taken away from the other inhabitants. We have already seen, in single examples, to what a length this system was carried; as one among many general measures we may mention that, on the 18th of December, all the shoemakers in the Empire were forbidden to work for anybody but the War department and the Admiralty, during the ensuing months. In the bureaux of the War Ministry and the Committee of Public Safety, investigations were carried on and plans drawn up by night and day; no exertions, no expense, no party feuds were allowed to interfere with the grand objects of the war. For in the wish to conquer Europe all the factions were united; and that same cruelty and violence, avarice and lawlessness, which rendered the Government of the country odious at home, served them everywhere in good stead in the task of equipping the army. While the absolute monarchs of Europe were obliged to show the most anxious regard to the weal and opinions of their subjects, this democratic Government went on its way crushing all obstacles under its iron heel.

The Finances, which generally play so important a part in the troubles of war, may be said to have long ceased to exist in France. Cambon boasted in the course of the winter, that the Government no longer spent 300 to 400 millions a month as before, but only 180 millions, with a double amount of forces; so successful, he said, had the administration of the Committee of Public Safety been in promoting order and economy.[1] Now, if we even subtract from this amount one-third as the loss upon the *assignats*,

[1] St. Just expresses himself to the same effect; vid. Buchez, 35, 294.

there still remains a war budget of 1,440 millions of francs for the year; or if we reckon the army in round numbers at a million soldiers, we find that each combatant cost 1,440 francs; while Napoleon, twelve years later, estimated the yearly average cost of a foot soldier at 500 francs, and that of a horse soldier at 1,000 francs, including all expenses for ammunition, sustenance, hospitals and fortresses.[1] We see how recklessly the Committee of Public Safety, though aiming at despotic order, dealt with the blood and marrow of the land; and if in State craft the choice of an object often deserves less praise than the attainment of it by suitable means, we shall only be able to accord to the capacity of this Government a very qualified meed of approbation; especially as many facts exist which compel us considerably to raise the amount of the figures given by Cambon. On one occasion during these months, when it was necessary to procure provisions from foreign countries, the Government granted the contractors, for a supply of the value of 1½ million, a yearly rent of 10 millions in the great ledger of the Republic;[2] and if a single instance of this kind was possible, the daily waste must have been infinite. Such a state of things was terrible for the future of the country, but it was no less terrible for its enemies in the approaching campaign. For whatever this Government required for the annihilation of the foe they were sure to obtain at whatever sacrifice, if it was at all attainable by blood or money.

Meanwhile the greatest activity had prevailed in all the camps ever since the law of the 22nd of November. Troops of recruits, numbering hundreds and often thousands of

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[1] In a letter to his brother Joseph, to whom, however, he wishes to make the estimate somewhat low. Other calculations proceeding from the revolutionary times give 1,000 francs as the general average for the whole army. — [2] *Convention nationale*, October 24th 1796. Conf. Yvernois, history of the French finances of 1796.

men, arrived day after day.[1] The zeal of individuals for military service was seldom very great; the people entered unwillingly upon their unexampled career of victory. The generals sent military agents into the provinces to support the civil authorities, and yet the progress made was but slow. In spite of all the efforts of the Committee of Public Safety the young men generally came without arms, and were enrolled promiscuously in the first battalion that happened to be at hand. From the want of weapons they could not be immediately drilled, and they therefore thought that they might for the present go home again, and deserted in spite of the strictest orders. The most urgent complaints poured in from all the divisions of the army, until, at the beginning of February, the Conventional Commissioners attached to the Army of the North, and the Army of the Ardennes, issued orders to arrest the parents of every deserter, to confiscate their property, to incarcerate the magistrates of their communes, and inflict upon them a fine of 4,000 francs. Hereupon most of the men yielded, though with complaints and murmurs; their condition was pitiable enough, since it was impossible in the exhausted Border lands to find decent accomodation and sustenance for the continually increasing mass of men, which amounted, in the Army of the North, for instance, to thirty thousand men in the first fortnight of the year, and to about as many in the two following months. The administration of the army exerted itself to the utmost; like all the other authorities of this period it acted with reckless violence, attained great results for the moment, and immediately destroyed them again by its own lawless confusion. In the beginning of March a Representative demanded that no cattle should be sent from the country into the camp, because, he said, the tillage of the land was at a stand-still in the former,

[1] The following is taken from the documents of the military archives at Paris.

while in the latter useless profusion prevailed; and a few days afterwards another Representative sent the bitterest complaints to Paris of the want—the horrible crushing want—of provisions. It was the same in all the departments of the military administration; the general result was that the rural districts were desolated, that the Army of the North had a standing sick-list of from 20,000 to 25,000 men, but that finally, by the spring, the forces were ready to commence hostilities.

The formation of the mixed semi-brigades was effected simultaneously with the introduction of the recruits, which naturally gave rise to much delay and confusion. Here there was a want of a nucleus for the battalions, and there of men to fill them up; and it was only gradually that matters could be adjusted. Even in the Convention objections had been again raised to the breaking up of the old regiments, and the War Committee had pointed to the confusion which would probably arise. But Dubois-Crancé carried his motion, as he had done the year before. "It is well for freedom," cried he, "if the military *esprit de corps* is destroyed; for it is just the troops of the Line who would be most easily attached to the person of an ambitious general." It was the inevitable fate of this revolutionary Government to be obliged to look with incessant suspicion on the army which it had itself created at such an enormous cost; the Convention repeated their order for the formation of the semi-brigades on the 8th of January. Hereupon the troops of the Line laid aside the white uniform of the old Royal army, although many of the officers could hardly make up their minds to assume the blue coat of the Republican volunteers. But the slightest trace of a reluctance of this kind immediately led to dismissal and imprisonment; and in this way many hundreds of the old leaders were expelled from the army. In filling up their places the Authorities looked chiefly to democratic zeal, and at first to little else, so that on the 15th of February the Con-

vention was obliged to decree the removal of all officers who were unable to read and write—a regulation which in spite of all the terrorism made use of was only very gradually carried out. With regard to military discipline, a great deal was said about obedience to the national will—i. e. to the Committee of Public Safety—and the officers were loudly exhorted always to use the language of fraternity and *sans-culottisme*, and not to oppress the troops after the tyrannical manner of the *ancien régime*. The Government still continued to send large packets of patriotic newspapers into the camp, which were distributed among the battalions, and read out to the soldiers in the evening after drill to animate their love of freedom. Everything was done to make the approaching campaign appear to them in the brightest possible colours, and the credulity of the French peasants rendered this an easy task. Most of them were convinced that the barbarous Austrians had in the preceding summer impaled and roasted children, and that those Austrians who longed for freedom would not charge their guns with ball in the ensuing spring, or fire upon their French brethren. At the same time the most alluring prospects of comfort and plunder in the soon-to-be-conquered Belgium were held out to them. It was, as we know, all over with the Girondist idea of a grand league of the Peoples, for the realization of which the monarchs were to be struck and their subjects spared. It had been officially declared in the Convention, that all the countries about to be conquered were to be treated as hostile lands, and the Committee of Public Safety had drawn up directions to the generals in this sense; the gist of which was, that whatever was not clinched and rivetted was to be taken away, and either given up to the troops or transported to France. The Armies of the Rhine and Moselle had already set the example in the districts of the Palatinate which they had occupied; they carried off from the towns and villages all that they could lay hands on—money, clothes, furniture,

cattle and provisions—and finally set fire to the empty buildings. The moral effect produced by such influences on the army of the North may be gathered from the following report of the 20th March to the Minister at War: "The army is firmly grounded in the grand principles of republicanism; it seems too that its morality is improving, and honesty is precious to many of the soldiers. There are indeed many exceptions. The majority of the tumults which we have to punish arise from thefts, but the number of these has for some time past decreased. Almost all our troops rejoice in the thought of giving themselves up to plunder as soon as we enter Belgium." We see from this that the Government, from its own immorality on the one side, and the necessities of war on the other, had hit upon the right means of forming an insolent soldateska. They demanded of the soldiers bravery in battle and political fidelity, but allowed them in return every kind of license and enjoyment, and thus endeavoured to attach the troops to themselves by exciting their highest enthusiasm and their lowest passions. The soldiers having once got over the pain of leaving home, were quickly filled with warlike zeal, began to rave about the Republic which promised them rich laurels and a dissolute life, and soon became the terror of all their enemies. But no feeling of duty was awakened in them, and they therefore quickly turned their backs upon the Republic as soon as a laurel-crowned chief appeared; and ruined him too by that avarice and selfishness which the Revolution had nurtured in their hearts, side by side with the thirst for fame.

Their professional training during the few months which were left for preparation was, indeed, very deficient. There was still a want, as in the preceding autumn, of skill in manœuvring, and in the steady coolness necessary for defence. Their leaders were well aware of this, but it caused them little anxiety. If the German troops fired with greater rapidity than their own men, the French officers

exhorted them to rush upon the foe with the bayonet—the darling weapon, as they called it, of republicans. If ever their undisciplined masses were scattered by a sudden panic, they calmly shrugged their shoulders, because the fugitives could be just as quickly rallied for a new attack. When their soldiers got into confusion at every attempt to execute some difficult movement, they taught them to despise all military artifice, and to place a blind reliance in the impulses of their own aggressive courage. Their maxim was, never to rest for a single moment, to be perpetually struggling with wind and weather, harassing the enemy by skirmishes, rushing upon them in heavy masses, utterly careless of the sacrifice of men; the Republic, they said, has soldiers enough; all that signifies is that it should be victorious, that the troops, the enemy, and the nation, should learn that the armies of France can never be beaten. Such was the language which the generals held to the army, and the Government to the generals. Impatient questions continually arrived from Paris, how long it would be before the French armies surprised the enemy in the field; nothing, they urged, was necessary for offensive movements but courage and bayonets, and all hesitation or ill-will might be overcome by energy and the axe of the executioner. In accordance with these instructions the Allied army's widely extended chain of outposts were kept on the alert at every point throughout the winter; forty skirmishes took place in three months; and at the end of March the first attempt on a large scale was made not far from Landrecy, about the centre of the enemy's position. Thirty thousand men marched against Cateau, to which place the Austrians had pushed forward eight battalions which were very embarrassing to the French fortress's line of communication. The young soldiers, trusting to their superiority in numbers, threw themselves upon the enemy with loud hurrahs; but when the latter stood their ground with cool self possession, the left wing of the French immediately paused, and the right-

wing, which had been pushing forward, dispersed in disorderly flight on the appearance of the Austrian reinforcements. It was a battalion of the Parisian levy which first began the flight; they were followed in irremediable confusion by a regiment of dragoons, and several guns remained in the hands of the victors. "It is evident," wrote the Conventional commissioners to Paris, "that it would be dangerous to lead these raw soldiers against the enemy too soon." The difficulty was increased by the unusually rainy weather, they therefore postponed the grand attack, and were consequently surprised by the offensive operations of the enemy.

The following were the positions of the French forces at that time. In the South the Army of the Alps, consisting of 25,000 men under General Dumas, and the Army of Italy, of 36,000 men under General Dumerbion, covered the frontiers of Piedmont from Geneva to the Genoese coast. In the Pyrenees 82,000 men under Generals Dugommier and Müller stood opposed to about 60,000 Spaniards and Portuguese. La Vendée and Bretagne, in which countries the barbarity of the republicans had inflamed the revolt afresh, occupied the attention of 103,000 men under General Turreau; the Army of the North, stationed on the Belgian frontier from Dunkirk to Maubeuge, had been raised to the number of 148,000 men, whose position was protected by twenty-six fortresses with garrisons amounting together to 74,000 men. Next in order came the Army of the Ardennes of 30,000 men from Maubeuge to the Meuse, which was intended to co-operate against Belgium. Then came the Moselle Army, and in close connexion with it the Army of the Rhine, which made up together a mass of 110,000 men.[1] The conduct of these powerful armies, which were

[1] These figures all refer to the effective force. The garrisons outside the *rayon* of the Army of the North amounted to nearly 100,000 men, so that the sum total of the effective force was 690,000 men; the entire force was 871,000 men. *Mémoires de Masséna* I. 4,

expected to deal decisive blows, was at present so arranged, that Pichegru, the favourite of St. Just, had, in January, received the command of the Army of the North, together with full powers, in case of need, to dispose of the Ardennes Army under General Charbonnier. Pichegru had been succeeded in the Army of the Rhine by General Michaud, and while Hoche had been first removed to Italy, at the instigation of St. Just, and then to a Parisian dungeon, the command of the Moselle Army was entrusted to the obnoxious, but respected and little dreaded Jourdan.

Ever since the fall of the Hebertists the centre of all military operations lay, not in the War Ministry, which had been broken up into three subordinate offices, but exclusively in the Committee of Public Safety, and more especially in the will of the only member acquainted with military affairs—Lazarus Carnot.[1] It was a providential circumstance, well suited to the character of these extraordinary times, that a man of Carnot's disposition should twice during the revolutionary troubles be placed in a position to decide the fate of Europe, although he was wanting in many of the most important qualities of a statesman, and was at the same time free from all the vices of a demagogue. Carnot was born at Nolay, a small town in Burgundy in 1753; he was the son of an *avocat* who was blessed with eighteen children, and was brought up in poor circumstances, but carefully educated. When only ten years old he betrayed his military tastes in the theatre at

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from the official documents. The current exaggerations may be hereby corrected. — [1] The *Mémoires sur Carnot par son fils* 2 vols. Paris, 1863, give a number of new and valuable particulars in addition to the facts already published; but it is a matter of complaint that the author has not circumstantially and thoroughly treated the most important portion of his subject—the military and political activity of Carnot—relating to which he had a number of authentic documents, but has used the latter aphoristically for the illustration of the personal character of his hero.

Dijon, where, during a military spectacle, he interrupted the performance, to the great amusement of the public, by "loudly crying out that the soldiers and the cannon must be differently posted, or every thing would fall into the hands of the enemy. He continued to manifest the same liveliness of apprehension during the whole course of his education, and quickly attained to independence of view and ardour of conviction. From his earliest years he displayed that indefatigable industry which always springs from the genuine desire of mental freedom; he drew upon himself reproofs and punishments from his teachers because he was incessantly at work, even during play hours, contrary to the regulations of the school. Every new impression set him to work afresh with passionate enthusiasm; he could not rest until he had arrived at a result in accordance with his inward convictions. Thus, for example, when he entered the military school at Paris he brought with him from home an earnest and simple piety, and soon found himself exposed to the ridicule of his playmates on account of his religious principles. He bore this for a while, undisturbed in his convictions; but being on one occasion ruffled in his feelings, he determined to institute a searching investigation, and studied theology for several years—in addition to mathematics and military science—with professional zeal, until he had come to a thorough understanding in respect to every doubt which had crossed his mind; a process which, it is true, left him but little of his childlike faith. By the side of this thoroughness and extraordinary capacity for labour, there soon grew up in him a stubbornness of mind, which in its varied consequences threw now a brilliant light and now a dark shade upon his character. He was not to be deterred from a great undertaking by any difficulties, but he was also incapable of giving up the pursuit of any phantom which he had once caught sight of. For many years he employed his time and energy on the problem of guiding an air-balloon at will, and considered

himself hardly compensated for his failure, when at three-and-twenty years old he was already Captain of engineers, an esteemed writer, and the discoverer of a great mechanical law. He had no passion but the desire of knowledge; the allurements of the world did not exist for him; temperance and disinterestedness were matters of course in a nature like his, which thirsted for knowledge alone. It was a no less marked trait in his disposition, which knew no charms but those of intellectual truth, that he retained and avowed all his convictions with unalterable firmness; at this point of his character, duty and enjoyment, ambition and self-respect united, while all the other goods of this world were entirely indifferent to him. And thus he lived for study and science alone, without regard to his external circumstances. It was a matter of indifference to him when his lively comrades called him an original, and a philosopher; he submitted patiently when his superiors in office punished the independence of his criticism by a long imprisonment in the Bastille. But when opposition was made to his views and principles, his powerful and ardent nature was moved to its very depths. He was utterly wanting in pliancy of mind; he could not for a moment look at a subject from another man's point of view; and every opponent, therefore, seemed to him to sin maliciously against indisputable truth.

He had hitherto only on one occasion, and that incidentally, taken any part in politics; it was when in a panegyric on Marshal Vauban he had extolled his system of taxation as one favourable to the poor, and had emphatically condemned the barbarity of the existing abuses. Exclusively occupied with his own thoughts, he took but little interest in the complicated problems of practical statesmanship, which engaged his attention only when they stirred some general human feeling in his heart. As, therefore, his whole being was one ardent impulse towards independence, the Revolution immediately and completely won him over to the great cause of "liberty, equality, and fraternity." In 1791 he

was sent by the town of Calais to the Legislative Assembly, joined the left in accordance with his general views, and adhered with all the logical consistency of a mathematician, or, as some will say, with all the inflexibility of a *savant*, to the views which he had once adopted. It was, in fact, in this case too the power of theory which ruled him. He clung to the principles which he had recognised as true, without deigning to cast a single glance at the more and more terrible consequences to which they led—without a thought of the practical conditions of success—without a notion that politics have to deal, not with propositions alone, but also with the powers and passions of mankind. The very moral firmness of his character made his dogmatic pertinacity all the more inflexible. He, for whom no suffering or sacrifice was too great where a conviction was concerned, could have heartily subscribed the words of Robespierre; "let principle be maintained though the country perish!" And thus he, the scientific officer, voted for arming the mob with pikes—for the emancipation of the soldiers from the law of blind obedience—for the rasing of all the citadels in the fortresses, that they might not be made the means of tyrannising over the towns. And thus he, generally the most just and conscientious of men, gave his vote for the execution of the king, entered Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, and formed a peculiarly close relation with Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, and the faction of Hebertists. For little as he sympathised with their utter vulgarity of mind, he found among them a more lively zeal for war and military affairs than among any other party, and was inclined to excuse their coarse brutality as manifesting unlimited devotion to their principles. He was only once in the club of the Jacobins, and when there heard a speech, declaring that there were no genuine patriots but the members of that club; he immediately decided never to set foot within its walls again. While selfish passions were raging all around him, he never thought of himself; he

who nominated and deposed generals continued to be a simple captain; it was not until after two years of service that he rose to the rank of major; after every journey undertaken in the public service, he conscientiously returned the money which he had not used to the Treasury, to the great annoyance of the officials, who had no columns for such an entry in their registers. As his whole attention was directed to the public interest, without any regard to his own, he was gradually led to oppose his colleagues on different occasions for the good of the cause. He incessantly declared that the war against La Vendée would never be finished until it was carried on in a more humane manner. He dared to choose the generals of the armies, and even the officials of his bureau, according to merit and capacity alone, without any regard to birth or party. He even ventured, now and then, to protect noblemen, and to appoint returned *Emigrés* to office. This was bidding defiance to the bitterest hatred of his party; but the danger which he thus incurred only made it still more pleasing to his unbending nature to do what was *right*.

In such a course he could not fail to meet with opponents. As he always adhered in the main to the party of Collot and Bouchotte, his breach with Robespierre and the Dantonists was open and declared before the beginning of the winter. When Bourdon once came into the Committee to demand the arrest of Bouchotte, Vincent and Pache—Carnot and Collot d'Herbois attacked him so furiously, that he feared for his own immediate imprisonment, and retired with suppressed rage. Robespierre was by no means well inclined to Bourdon, but he entertained a far fiercer hatred against the Hebertists, and detested Carnot as much as any of them. "If I could", he cried, on one occasion, "but gain a knowledge of these cursed military affairs, and be able to dispense with that intolerable Carnot!" There was in fact no possibility of bringing about a reconciliation between these two men. Robespierre could

not pardon the stubborn independence of his colleague, and Carnot revolted with increasing violence at every fresh encroachment of Robespierre. "You are a dictator," he cried out to him one day before the assembled Committee, amidst the timid silence of the other members—"you are a dictator, there is nothing but despotism in all your actions." [1] "We need your services," said Robespierre another time, "and we therefore tolerate you in the Committee; but remember that at the very first disaster of the armies you will lose your head." [2] Such threats excited in Carnot no other feeling than that of bitter contempt; surrounded by hatred and threats he proceeded unmoved on his way to the struggle with united Europe. He showed from the very first moment what a strong and confident will can effect in human affairs. Although he possessed no especial talent for military command, as we shall hereafter see in detail, and though he manifested the same clumsy dogmatism in the conduct of warlike operations as in political life, yet his entrance into the war of the Revolution was marked by extraordinary progress. The main objects to be kept in sight—large views, energetic aggression, formation of overpowering armies—had indeed been already pointed out in 1793 by Dumouriez, Custine and Hoche. But at that period all such attempts had only called forth the suspicions of the demagogues, and brought their originators into irretrievable ruin. Now at last the genius of genuine war had an energetic representative in the very highest seat of government, and a new spirit of systematic regularity and courageous confidence was diffused into the previously dilatory or disorderly movements of the French armies. To understand the views according to which he gave the irresistible force of unity to the confused and innumerable masses of the French troops, we must first take into consideration a series of other circumstances, hitherto almost unknown.

[1] Levasseur Conv. Nat. 6, germ. III. — [2] Tissot, Carnot p. 65.

France was at this time surrounded by enemies on every side. At home she had to struggle with La Vendée, and in the South to meet the Spaniards and Portuguese in the Pyrenees, and the Sardinians and Austrians in the Alps. On the Rhine and in Belgium, indeed, she had for the moment warded off the invasion of the enemy; but she had now for the first time to look for the decisive collision, on the one hand with Prussia and the troops of the Empire, and on the other with the Austrians and English. In the face of these numerous enemies the Committee of Public Safety was incessantly endeavouring to clear the way for its armies by diplomatic successes; to draw over the neutral governments to the French side, and to kindle the torch of Revolution in the hostile States. While Carnot directed the military operations, these foreign affairs were presided over, with almost unlimited powers, first by Herault de Séchelles, and then by Barère. These departments of the Government knew no scruple, no hesitation, no shrinking from any sacrifice, if it did but promote the great object in view. Both departments dipped deep into the property of the French nation, attained to great results, and saw immeasurable sums uselessly squandered by the baseness and imbecility of their agents. Let us endeavour to take a general view of this propaganda—which has already come under our notice—in its full proportions; now that it came forward in a more complicated and systematic form than ever.

During the winter 1793—94, it was to three grand theatres especially that it directed its attention—Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe. As regards Germany, there were French agents in almost all the more important States—partly natives of kindred sentiments, partly pretended *Emigrés* and double spies. Their task was to watch the armaments and movements of troops, to sound the feelings of the smaller Courts, and to excite the Bourgeois and peasants against the existing order of things. But the Committee founded its

chief hopes, at this time, on a Revolution in the two Republics which had separated themselves from the German Empire on the North and South, and whose position promised the most powerful reaction upon Germany in case of a revolutionary change;—we mean, of course, Holland and Switzerland. The unexpected issue of the last campaign had filled the opponents of Orange in Holland with new life. In March the Committee of Public Safety received information from the Hague, that, in spite of all the watchfulness of the police, the country stood on the very brink of a revolution, the outbreak of which in Belgium would certainly follow the first victory of the French arms. The neutrality of Switzerland enabled the French to maintain an accredited envoy in that country, who made himself the centre of a constant agitation which was spread through all the cantons. This office was still held by the quondam Marquis Barthélemy, whom we have already seen actively engaged in the Genevese troubles in 1792. He was now assisted by a former Abbé named Soulavie, a confidant of Robespierre, and now French minister in Geneva, where the ruling democracy was eagerly imitating the Parisian reign of terror on a small scale. These two vied with one another in sending in hopeful reports and ever fresh demands for money. By the month of March, 1794, they had already used 40 million francs, in return for which they had sent some corn to France, but had spent the greater part of the money in promoting a still unaccomplished alliance.

Greater progress had been made in Italy. In Turin French money had secured access even to the Royal Cabinet. Its secretary Dufour received a pension from the Committee of Public Safety, in return for which he handed over the war plans, and the diplomatic correspondence with Austria, and formed a conspiracy with one of the leading merchants of the city, the object of which was to betray Turin into the hands of the French Army of the Alps. The plan was, that in the spring General Dumerbion should suddenly

occupy the neutral territory of Genoa, cross the Appenines from this point, and then break into Piedmont on its entirely unprotected side. At the approach of the French columns the conspirators were to set fire to the theatre, the churches, and other public buildings, excite a tumult and a rising amongst the people, and open the gates of the city to the enemy under favour of the general confusion. In accordance with this plan Tilly, the *chargé d'affaires* of the Republic at Genoa, was employed to form a democratic party in that city, to gain over the Senate to an alliance with France, or, in case of its refusal, to overthrow it by a revolt of the mob. Similar intrigues were carried on in Florence; the Tuscan minister, Manfredini, had long been regarded as an adherent of the Jacobins; so that in the summer of 1793 it came to a personal quarrel of the most violent kind between him and the English ambassador, and England extorted the dismissal of the French *chargé d'affaires*, Laflotte, by open threats of war. [1] But the most important *pendant* to the Turinese *coup d'état* was prepared in Naples. While the Government of that country was exclusively supported by the clergy, and the lower classes of the people, whom they filled with fanaticism—while the king chatted with the *lazzaroni* of the capital, and the Minister persecuted every liberal movement in the country with torture and the axe—the middle and more cultivated portion of the population was deeply stirred by a more and more passionate impatience for political rights, administrative reform, and social equality. Under these circumstances it was not difficult for the French agents—who here, too, spent countless sums of money—to form a grand conspiracy, which included several thousand inhabitants of the capital, and aimed at a general rising of Southern Italy, simultaneously with the expected outbreak in Turin. They had reason to hope, at the first successful advance of the French troops, to see the flames break

[1]) October 1793. The Prussian resident Caesar to his Ministry.

forth at the same moment in Turin, Genoa and Naples—Tuscany brought to a state of willing submission, and the whole peninsula in flames.

With no less energy did the Committee of Public Safety take up most of the schemes of its Dantonist predecessors in respect to Eastern Europe. The catastrophe of the 10th of May, and the 31st of July, had for a time interrupted the intrigues which had been set on foot; but the interests of the Republic in this quarter were too unmistakeable; and as early as August we find negotiations in full operation in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Constantinople. Reuterholm and Staël, always actuated by the same longing for French subsidies, kept Sweden firmly to its once professed leaning towards France. Staël, who had left Paris for Switzerland after the 31st of May, succeeded with the aid of the diplomatist Verninac, who was sent after him, in forming the draft of a new alliance, and hastened thence to Copenhagen, to win over the Danish Court also to this scheme. The task, however, proved to be more difficult than he had expected. It is true that the Danish Government had greater apprehensions of the English supremacy at sea than of Jacobin principles on the continent; nor were there wanting complaints of infringement of the neutral commerce on the part of British vessels. But the minister Bernsdorff, oppressed on the one hand by his fear of England, and on the other by the threats of Russia, could not make up his mind to a decided step. All that Staël could achieve was a separate treaty with Sweden, in which the two Powers mutually engaged to equip a fleet for the protection of their trade against all illegal interference. This measure gave great offence both in London and St. Petersburg, while in Paris it was regarded as unsatisfactory; and the definitive treaty and the payment of subsidies were not yet accorded to the Swedes, in spite of their urgent representations. The Committee did not quite trust its greedy ally, and refused to pay until Sweden had irrevocably broken with the Powers. And thus the negotiation dragged on without result, to the great sorrow of the Swedes;

they did not, however, allow themselves to be deterred, but meanwhile, in expectation of the grand armed alliance, placed all their diplomatic resources at the disposal of the French government. As early as August, 1793, their dragoman Muradgea had vehemently urged the Turkish ministers to take part in the European quarrel, and to save France, which was at that time so dangerously threatened, by dealing a powerful blow against the Austrians. He had really roused the Divan from its accustomed apathy, and had paved the way for the efforts of the French plenipotentiary. This envoy suddenly found such a number of friendly statesmen with hands open to bribes in the Divan, that by the month of March he had given away four million francs in gold and diamonds; in return for which he received the repeated assurance that the war against the Emperor, or at any rate serious preparations for it, should almost immediately be commenced. With this view Sultan Selim asked for a number of French officers to place the discipline and tactics of his troops on a European footing. The Committee of Public Safety gladly sent them, and thus the same years in which Western Europe underwent its revolutionary new birth, also saw the commencement of a fundamental change in the old Osman Empire. But for the moment the result was scarcely visible; the Sublime Porte had been thoroughly exhausted by the war of 1788, its treasury emptied, and the numbers of its troops greatly reduced. The Divan, well aware that an attack on Austria would immediately bring the Russians into the field, wavered irresolutely between ambition and fear, without any presentiment of the storm which their impotent deliberations were gathering over the empire. The Parisian rulers were all the more eager for the final result, because in case of a warlike resolution on the part of the Porte, they could at once put an end to the hesitation of the Swedes, and give the two States an effectual support and ready means of communication by a popular movement in Poland. The fugitive

patriots from this unhappy land had dispersed, some to Paris and Dresden, others to Lemberg, Vienna and Constantinople; they kept up a secret understanding with all the provinces of their country, and received from France the requisite means for warlike preparations. With their native restlessness and ardour they urged the Porte to proclaim war against Russia; and promised the Sultan and the Committee of Public Safety, to fill the whole country between the Vistula and the Duna, between the Carpathians and the Baltic, with the storm of a mighty revolution. If, at the same time, a Turkish army appeared on the Danube, a Swedish force in Russia, and the French armies rolled like a flood over Belgium, the Rhine and Italy, what could prevent the old monarchical constitution of Europe from being utterly unhinged!

The prospect was splendid enough to fix the gaze of the French rulers by its demoniacal charms, and to suppress again and again the well-founded impatience which began to show itself. For as the demands for money continually increased, while the results still remained problematical, there arose in the Committee, from time to time, a painful doubt whether these foreign connections were worth the enormous sacrifices which they cost; whether they were not being cheated of million after million by empty promises or thoughtless extravagance. The internal feuds of parties had their effect upon these questions also. In the beginning of March, St. Just loaded Hérault and Barère with bitter reproaches, declared that they had wasted more than two hundred million francs on illusory phantoms, and proposed that all secret expenditure should be stopped, nay, that all the correspondence which had been carried on respecting these matters should be published, with the sole exception of the Turkish negotiation. This quarrel contributed no little to the fall of Hérault, which took place soon afterwards; in other respects, however, the Committee was far from approving of St. Just's proposals. It was resolved to proceed

for the future somewhat more cautiously in the outlay of money, but in the main to adhere to the previous course, and to adapt the plan of warlike operations to the system of the grand propaganda.

When the Government of France took all these complications into consideration, when they looked to the possibility of a revolution in Italy, and a combined movement of the Turks and Swedes, when they remembered the weakness of Spain, the alienation between Prussia and the Emperor, and lastly the well-known pecuniary exhaustion of the two German Powers, they could not for a moment doubt that among all the enemies of the Republic there was none so dangerous, so troublesome and destructive, as England. For it was England which had fixed the great Austrian army in Belgium by her protest against the Bavarian exchange, and given that army its direction towards the frontier provinces which lay so near to the French capital. England alone could enable the German Powers to make further considerable preparations, by a liberal use of her pecuniary resources. England alone could lay fetters upon Stockholm, Constantinople, Genoa, Leghorn and Naples, by an irresistible display of her naval power; and strike from the hands of them all the swords which they were about to brandish on the side of France. It was from these considerations that the Committee of Public Safety had already resolved, in the autumn of 1793, to deal a blow at the heart of this mighty adversary, and to prepare a considerable force to attempt a landing on the English coast. For this purpose all the ship-timber and the whole mercantile fleet of the Empire were placed at the disposal of the French Admiralty. A member of the Committee, Jean Bon St. André, with infinite activity and unlimited pecuniary means, superintended the equipment of a stately fleet in Brest to protect the transport of the troops; and now that the rising in La Vendée had been put down, the Western army of the Republic seemed once more at the disposal of Government, and it was

determined to employ it in commencing this important maritime enterprise. Considering the extent of the preparations required, it might have seemed doubtful whether they could be completed during the ensuing campaign; the French Government, however, entertained no such doubt, but on the contrary took the accomplishment of the expedition for granted; nay, they forced the other armies to adapt their resources, their projects and operations, to the requirements of the English expedition. These steps were, indeed, in accordance with the vast importance of the latter, but they brought new difficulties to those engaged on the other theatres of war, from which, as we shall presently see, the greatest dangers might have arisen, had the opportunity been made use of by an energetic opponent.

Carnot was thoroughly persuaded that France was incapable of a second effort of equal magnitude with that which she was now making. It was, he thought, absolutely necessary to carry on the contest with the most rapid and crushing blows, and to force the enemy to sue for peace before the end of the year. With a view, therefore, of collecting an absolutely overpowering force at the most important points, he ordered that at the Pyrenees, where the weakness of the Spaniards threatened no danger, and on the Rhine, where a great desire of peace was imputed to the Prussians, the French armies should content themselves with defending their own soil, or at most with capturing any near and important position on the borders. But with all the more impetuosity was an aggressive war to be carried on in the South against Italy, and in the North against Belgium. In exact accordance with the Turin plot, it was determined that the Italian army should occupy the Genoese coast as soon as the season became favourable, and should then fall upon Piedmont from the South, and, after the capture of Turin, support the further revolutionary movements in the Peninsula. From the strength of the democratic party, and the ill feeling between the Austrians and Piedmontese,

they had reason to hope for easy and rapid successes. In Belgium, indeed, they had to make up their minds to a more severe and bloody contest, but the vast numbers of his forces rendered Carnot certain even here of complete and annihilating victory. In order thoroughly to understand his plan, it will be necessary to set before the reader the theatre of war in its more general features.

In the year 1793 the Allies had taken three fortresses, Condé, Valenciennes, and Le Quesnoi, about the centre of the Belgian frontier; and had thus, as it were, driven a sharp wedge into the body of the Republic in the direction of Paris. To the west of these strong places the broad plain of Flanders stretches between the Scheldt and the sea, intersected by the Lys; on their east we enter the hilly and wooded country on both sides of the Sambre, and following the course of this river we reach the Meuse at Namur, which likewise turning to the east at this point, makes its way through the last spurs of the Ardennes, towards Liége. This whole territory, as we see, is divided into three districts, in the eastern of which the Sambre flows to the Meuse, in the western the Lys to the Scheldt. In the central division, between the Scheldt and the Sambre, the Allies had pushed forward their fortified point, and in this quarter—as was to be expected—they would unite their main forces at the opening of the campaign, with a view to a farther advance.

Under these circumstances the most natural course for the French was to collect an overpowering force between the Scheldt and the Sambre, and immediately to attack Valenciennes. But Carnot considered that a victory gained at this point would only drive the enemy back to his fortresses, and would leave him the possibility of rapidly reinforcing himself and assuming the offensive again. "We must finish the matter," he wrote to Pichegru on the 11th of February, "in this very year; we shall lose every thing, if we do not make rapid progress, and destroy the hostile army to the last man within three months; otherwise we should have

to begin afresh next year, and should perish by hunger and exhaustion; I repeat, therefore, we must make an end."

In accordance with these views he gave the following instructions. At the central point above referred to, opposite the lost fortresses, the French generals were to confine themselves to a vigorous and determined defence with about 60,000 men. On the other hand they were to use every effort to procure continual reinforcements for the Army of the North, and thus enable themselves to commence an attack upon Flanders with more than 100,000 men, to capture Ypres, the chief place of the country between the Lys and the ocean, to fight a bloody battle with the Allies, and deluge all maritime Flanders with their troops as far as Ostend. While Brussels was thus made to tremble on the one side, the Army of the Ardennes on the other—raised to the number of 40,000 men by some divisions of the Army of the North—was to pass the Sambre at Charleroi, and after masking Namur to enter Belgium. At the same time 20,000 men of the Moselle Army were to make a diversion against Liége by marching through Luxemburg, with a view of dividing the attention and the forces of the adversary. And thus, hard pressed on every side, surrounded and harassed by continual assaults, it was hoped that the enemy could not escape complete destruction.

The fundamental idea of this plan, therefore, was to outflank the enemy on both wings, and to enclose and crush his entire military power. As the French could reckon on a doubly superior force, such a problem did not in itself seem hopeless of solution; but if we consider their resources in detail, we must confess that they only partially answered the object in view. If Carnot wished to cut off and surround the Austrians, it seems clear that the main body of the French would have been in their proper place, not in Flanders, where they could do the enemy no essential injury, but on the Meuse and Sambre, where they would immediately threaten his line of supplies and retreat. Carnot on the

contrary exposed his army to the twofold danger, either that the Allies, without troubling themselves about the smaller divisions on the Sambre, would throw themselves in double force on Pichegru and drive him into the sea; or that, disregarding Pichegru's progress in Flanders, they would overpower the Ardennes army with overwhelming numbers, and by thus threatening Paris compel Pichegru to a hasty return. All this would be avoided if a smaller corps had been directed against Flanders, and the strongest masses united on the Sambre; as, indeed, was proved by the result in the most striking manner a few months afterwards. This is so evident, that all the professional critics—e. g. Jomini and Soult—cannot find words strong enough to express their contemptous disapproval. No one, however, as far as we know, has as yet pointed out the motive which led Carnot to make this great mistake, by which the success of the whole campaign was imperilled. This motive, as may be decidedly proved from Carnot's correspondence, was no other than the desire to promote the landing in England. He hoped by the beginning of the summer to see the Army of the West before the gates of London, and he wished, in case of need, to be able to support it by a strong reinforcement; Pichegru, therefore, received instructions at all hazards to take up a position in maritime Flanders with the greatest part of his division. Carnot hereby placed himself in the most critical position which a general can occupy, that of pursuing two completely disparate objects at the same time, and thereby necessarily forming lame and inconsistent resolutions. This was a further manifestation of his, not exactly irresolute, but on the whole unpractical nature; for true practical talent chiefly manifests itself by unity and consistency of action.

Let us now once more review the whole field of these armaments and preparations for war. We behold a vast realm of 24 million inhabitants agitated to its very centre, dripping with blood, fermenting with party hatred, but held together by an iron despotism, and armed like a giant for

the strife, with all its resources of men and money. We see mighty hordes of men on every frontier, to which countless reinforcements are incessantly pouring, some armed for defence in superior numbers, others preparing to deal simultaneously three great and distant blows at Turin, Amsterdam and London; and lastly, we see a net of diplomatic and demagogic intrigues extending over the whole of Europe, along the glowing threads of which revolt and war were to be spread through Switzerland and Italy, Poland and Prussia, and over the shores of the Baltic and the Euxine. And thus the Revolution rises more terrible and impetuous than ever, no longer proclaiming freedom to the nations, but democratic violence against the Powers of ancient Europe. If we look only at the amount and the variety of its resources, the result seems already decided and all resistance necessarily hopeless.

But it is no less certain that the foundation on which this mighty structure rose was everywhere undermined and crumbling away. Wherever we look more closely into the nature of the French schemes and armaments, we discern the suicidal effects of revolutionary violence and terrorizing crime. The troops, drawn together against their will, had to learn in battle itself their own capacity for war, and prove their fidelity to the flag under which they fought. The leaders are directed to run all risks, because the Government sees in the background of its colossal exertions nothing but hopeless exhaustion, and knows that it can only choose between rapid victory and sudden collapse. In the midst of these tormenting terrors it resorts to all kinds of schemes at the same time—schemes which seem to promise the destruction of its enemies, but at the same time mutually impede and destroy one another. It lavishes the material resources of the empire with boundless extravagance, partly on the army, which in a healthy State would have been maintained at half the cost, and partly on a diplomacy, which, while always chasing retreating phantoms, has to pay for every

step it takes with millions. Notwithstanding all its efforts to attain consistency and methodical unity, this Government cannot free itself entirely from that spirit of anarchy in which it has been reared. It is able, indeed, to give a powerful impulse to the stream, but the force of the stream itself is everywhere broken by immorality, laxity and self-conceit.

The Revolution, therefore, on this occasion attained to no definite result. The danger to the Powers of Europe was great, indeed, but there were still many chances of crossing the French plans, of breaking through the toils of Carnot, and leading the iron veterans of the old armies to victory over the surging masses of the Republicans. But the errors of 1793 were destined to be repeated on a still greater scale: at the same moment in which France was collecting all her strength to deal a fatal blow, the Powers, allured by other hopes, were turning their attention to a new theatre of war. The institutions of old Europe were to receive the annihilating blow, not from the hands of its enemies, but of its defenders. No other triumph was in store for the French armies but to fight a few bloody battles with a voluntarily retreating adversary.

These resolutions of the Powers, so pregnant with consequences, were brought about by a political development hitherto, in the main, unknown. We should be unable rightly to comprehend any point in the campaign of 1794, if we did not previously realise to our minds the questions and the cares which had agitated the policy of the European cabinets since the autumn of 1793.

CHAPTER II.

RUSSIAN PLANS AGAINST TURKEY.

Position of the Empress Catharine.—Her designs upon Constantinople. Misunderstanding with Prussia.—State of affairs in Vienna.—England endeavours to consolidate the coalition against France.—Thugut regards Prussia as a more dangerous enemy than France.—England continues to negotiate with Prussia.—The Prince of Coburg.—The Emperor Francis goes to Belgium.—Russia prepares for war against Turkey.

Ever since the beginning of the revolutionary war Catharine II. had gained triumph after triumph. Austria and Prussia vied with one another for her favour; England was driven into an alliance with her by the attacks of France; the kings of Spain and Sardinia, the Princes of the German empire, and the French *Émigrés*, began to regard the Northern military State as the surest asylum of legitimacy. Bold and wary at the same time, the Empress had made use of this position of affairs to bring one of the great ideas of her life almost to fulfilment. Poland lay fettered at her feet. Nearly half this unhappy land had been incorporated with the Russian empire, and the other half was subjected by the treaty of October 18th; and these great results had been attained at the small sacrifice of a fair, but not very extensive, province to Prussia. A less grasping nature would have rested satisfied with so splendid an acquisition; the blood-red glow of such a conquest would have seemed to others like the glorious sunset of an active life. But for the mind of this woman there was no limit and no repose. She was now in her sixtieth year; her growing malady reminded her frequently enough of her approaching end; but if she ever felt touched by the prospect, the anticipation only formed an additional impulse to hurry on all her cherished projects

to completion, before the night of death should descend upon her.

Yet she had reason enough to grant herself, her peoples, and her neighbours, an interval of repose. Russia paid dearly for the triumphs of her ambition. The recruiting of the army was only effected by the greatest efforts of the government, amidst the strongest reluctance of the people. The troops, incessantly kept on the alert by her endless plans of conquest, and moved from place to place by perpetual changes of organisation, began to be at the same time exhausted and demoralised. In spite of the increasing taxes, the Treasury was in no department equal to its expenses; foreign credit was ruined, and the national paper-money greatly depreciated. Agriculture suffered much from the military proscriptions, and trade from the prohibitory duties on exports and imports, enacted for the protection of feeble manufactures. The position of the country, therefore, was in every respect a depressed one. All classes of the population shared in the general distress, and in the towns, more especially, the general feeling was one of anxiety and excitement. The Ministers were well aware of this, but assumed an external appearance of proud security. "We," said Markoff on one occasion to the Prussian ambassador, "we alone of all the Powers have no occasion to fear, or to contend against, the French revolution on account of our own subjects." "In spite of these proud words," added Count Golz in his report, "the Russian government also are obliged to take the severest measures in several provinces to prevent outbreaks." Much was concealed from the Empress, who was always pushing on, and, therefore, did not like to hear of obstacles. The year 1794 began with a long continued scarcity of provisions, so that in St. Petersburg a pound of meat cost 10 sous (five pence). When Catharine one day at dinner enquired the price of meat, her favourite, Suboff, stated it at half, and no one dared to correct him. This weak and conceited man enjoyed the greatest influence even in political matters, and threw, first the supple Vice-

Chancellor Ostermann, and then even the proud Count Besborodko, completely into the shade. He had succeeded in getting the Polish affairs completely into his own hands; his credit had risen through the favourable issue to which they had been brought; he strove, unlike most of the former favourites of the Empress, not merely to gratify her passions, but likewise to assume the position of an actual Regent, after the manner of Potemkin, and to outshine his great exemplar both in the Polish and the Turkish schemes. And Markoff again, in order to ingratiate himself with the favourite, placed all his knowledge skill and unconscientiousness at the disposal of Suboff.

Catharine was only too ready to meet these wishes. She had broken off the war with Turkey, three years before, with angry reluctance; and the renewal of it was with her only a question of time and opportunity. She despised with very good reason the military means of defence possessed by the Porte, and considered the result uncertain only in case France should aid the Turks with money, troops and fleets. It appeared to her, therefore, a matter of the greatest consequence to make sure of England, which alone was able to block up the passage of the French from the Mediterranean sea. There was no doubt that England would grant the Empress a definitive treaty, only on condition of her sending her troops into the field, not against Turkey, but against the French. Negotiations were constantly carried on between the two courts for a giant expedition against the French coast; Catharine tried endless expedients to make England subservient to her will by mercantile prohibitions, but attained no other result than an increase of the proud firmness of England's attitude. Under these circumstances what could be more welcome to Catharine than the above-mentioned French intrigues in Constantinople—than the news which reached St. Petersburg at the end of September, that Muradgea and Descorches were goading on the Porte to attack her, and were daily gaining ground? If the Turks themselves violated

the peace, in alliance with France—if they attacked the Emperor of Austria in the rear with a view of relieving the French—it was evident that England, far from continuing to protect them, must be grateful to the Imperial courts, and ready to aid them, when they energetically repulsed this new disturber of the peace. Catharine zealously seized the opportunity. No sooner had intelligence to the same purport arrived in Vienna, and the question been asked by the Austrian court what Russia intended to do in case the Turks should attack Hungary, than Catharine gave orders for the most extensive warlike preparations. General Suworoff hastened to the Crimea to assume the command of the troops in that province and as far as the Caucasus, amounting in all to 60,000 men. Prince Dolgoruki collected an army of equal strength in the Ukraine; all the officers and men on furlough belonging to these regiments were ordered to join their standards without delay, and the Euxine fleet was got ready with the greatest zeal, that decisive operations against Constantinople might be commenced at the very beginning of spring. It was announced to the Emperor in the most emphatic manner, that Russia, ever mindful of her duty as an ally, would make her appearance in full force on the theatre of war, at the first hostile movement of the Turks.[1]

It was above all essential not to extinguish prematurely, by the weight of these warlike preparations, the faint spark of military ardour in the Turks. After long vacillation the Government at Constantinople had come to the resolution to take a first, but still only a preliminary, step; an extraordinary Envoy was to be sent to St. Petersburg to demand a change in the Russian scale of duties, fixed by the peace of Jassy; and in case of refusal to threaten a breach of the friendly relations between the two governments. The Rus-

[1] Igelström's communications to Buchholz. Buchholz's dispatch to the king, Jan. 30.

sian court considered itself insulted by the mere announcement of such an embassy; Ostermann spoke with contemptuous scorn of the ambassador, whom he loudly and openly designated, before a numerous company, as "that ragamuffin, that saucy rascal." A negotiation commenced under such auspices could not be of long duration. While the Empress deferred her answer to the question about the tariff from one month to another, Russian agents were zealously employed in Moldavia and Wallachia in stirring up the Roumans to a revolt against the Sultan. When the Turkish ambassador prepared to make complaints on the subject, the Ministers redoubled their rudeness to him; and when at last, in February, he received a decidedly negative answer about the tariff, the Turks considered war as unavoidable. It is true that their warlike impulses had entirely subsided; they had allowed themselves to be somewhat excited by Descorches, as long as the danger was still distant; but now that it suddenly stood close before their doors, they sank back in the feeling of their own utter weakness. The Sultan, indeed, gave orders to set on foot an army of 120,000 men, that he might not be surprised in a state of defencelessness by a superior enemy; but all traces of a desire to commence the war had completely vanished from his mind.

In St. Petersburg, however, they paid little attention to these peaceful feelings, but looked only at the warlike preparations, which they immediately denounced as a fresh sign of increased hostility, and hastened to answer by steps of their own of an equally hostile nature. The representative of Russia at Warsaw, General Igelström, received orders to inform the Polish government that the army of the Republic must be immediately reduced to the insignificant number of 15,000 men. As soon as this order had been complied with, and the disarming of Poland thereby completed, about half the Russian regiments which were now stationed in that country were to return home, and be employed as a reserve in the Turkish war. Orders were sent to Lithuania and

Volhynia to collect large stores of corn, and to form colossal magazines; General Soltikoff was nominated Commander-in-chief of the two Southern armies, and the admirals of the Euxine fleet were sent off in all haste to their stations. "Turkey will not indeed attack *us*," said Markoff, "but the Emperor; and she shall then be made to feel what it is to insult an ally of ours."

Whether the Government in St. Petersburg really believed in such an attack, or only put it forward as a pretext for their own warlike movements, it was natural that their relation to Austria should be brought prominently forward by this misunderstanding with the Porte. In our times it is not necessary to prove, that in a serious war between the Russians and Turks Austria can never remain neutral. When the helm of the Austrian State is in the hands of a really strong and far-seeing statesman, he will always resist the extension of Russian power to the south of the Danube; if blindness or corruption preside over the destinies of Austria, she will, at any rate, wish to share the booty with her dangerous neighbour. There was no more important question for Catharine than this. The attitude which Thugut had assumed from his first entrance into the Ministry, his declaration that, like Joseph II., he wished to unite with no country more closely and intimately than with Russia, had been observed with the greatest satisfaction in St. Petersburg. It is true that Catharine had not been able, as Thugut wished, to undo the Polish partition which had been once agreed upon; but still, as we have seen, she did her best to render the success of the Prussian King late and difficult. And in all other respects she met the wishes of Austria with the greatest readiness; the great object being to convert the Emperor to the Eastern policy of Joseph II.

The immediate effects of this new tendency were felt, as could not fail to be the case, by Prussia. We have already seen how her friendly relations to Russia had been disturbed and cooled in the course of the Polish proceedings. Catharine

had sacrificed a Polish province to Prussia with the greatest reluctance, had done everything to limit Prussian influence in Poland, and, lastly, had seen with the greatest indignation that Prussia had almost entirely withdrawn from the coalition against France, to dispose of her resources against Poland. This was extremely disagreeable to Catharine in reference to the Polish question itself, and also as a sign of independence which Catharine could not brook in any of her allies; and it was doubly disagreeable in reference to the interests of Russia. For in her intended war with Turkey Catharine had no source of anxiety but the fear of French interference; she wished, therefore, that France should be as hard pressed as possible within her own borders, and resolved to incite Prussia all the more energetically, because, during the Oriental crisis, she was obliged to deal more gently with Austria. All that had hitherto taken place between the two courts bore the stamp of this resolution. As early as the 15th of October, 1793, when Catharine received intelligence that the king of Prussia was going from the Rhine to Poland, to conclude his treaty with the Republic, she wrote to him that she rejoiced that Poland had meanwhile yielded; that she was all the more glad, because Prussia could now devote herself with all her soul to the holy war against the Revolution. When, therefore, Lucchesini's note to Austria (of the 23rd of September) was made known, in which Prussia roundly declared that she had no means for the further continuance of the French war, the official circles in St. Petersburg manifested a virtuous indignation. They lamented that a groundless jealousy against Austria should blind the king to the highest duty of all crowned heads, the crushing of the Revolution. On the arrival of the news of Wurmser's victory in the lines of Weissenburg, the Russian court surrounded the Austrian Ambassador with the liveliest congratulations; while Count Golz, shunned by everybody, only received a few short and half friendly words from the Empress herself. Almost on the same day

she sent off a note to Berlin, in which she demanded, with insulting vehemence, the co-operation of Prussia in the French war, on the ground of the last treaty of St. Petersburg. The Empress, it said, would herself send troops, if the Porte were not threatening her with war at the instigation of France; but she was all the more urgently obliged to remind Prussia of its duties, and hoped that her wish, which was only grounded on the love of justice and the public weal, would not be rejected in Berlin, because its fulfilment would bring advantage to a third Power (Austria), which did not stand high in Prussian favour. The king received these by no means polite intimations with tolerable composure, since he had thrown off all his anger against Catharine after the submission of the Poles, and again eagerly wished to return immediately to the war against the Jacobins, whom he hated with a deadly hate. He had already begged the court of Vienna to send a special envoy with whom he might come to an understanding as speedily as possible. Under the influence of the same feeling, he paid no regard to the uncourteous form of the Russian note, and contented himself with declaring that there could be no question of any obligation on the part of Prussia to make war upon France, since a vital condition of the Convention of St. Petersburg—the accession of Austria—had not been fulfilled. He added, however, that Catharine might set her mind at rest, for that Prussia would indefatigably fight against the Revolution, as soon as her financial necessities were relieved by sufficient subsidies. Count Golz, on the other hand, who felt himself personally insulted by the tone of the Russian ministers, expressed himself more vehemently. At the end of November a very sharp discussion took place between him and Markoff. Golz declared that the above-mentioned note was more hostile towards Prussia than towards France; Markoff in reply expressed his regret that Golz, who had hitherto been the chief support of the alliance, had become so irritable. Golz rejoined that he still considered this alliance very desirable, but that

he was sorry to see that Russia was beginning to act without any regard to Prussian interests, and was thereby compelling Prussia carefully to spare her resources. Whereupon Markoff said, somewhat incautiously, that whatever might happen Prussia had no other choice than to unite with the other Powers against the Jacobins. Golz then broke out into a violent rage. "Do not be deceived," he cried, "our troops fight bravely against the French from feelings of honour and duty; but I tell you that against other enemies they would fight like tigers." The Russian turned the matter off with general assurances of friendship: "It would be as well," said Golz in conclusion, "to treat so important a military State as ours with a little more discretion."

Irritated feelings are only inflamed by expression, when they arise, not from misunderstanding, but from facts. The Prussian government, therefore, blamed its ambassador for his candour, and was indeed soon made to feel its consequences. For Catharine answered the bold speeches of Count Golz, on the 3rd December, by a letter to the king, the tone of which was far more imperious than the former note. After repeatedly reminding the king of his duties to the good cause, and exhorting him not to trouble the other Powers any longer by his eagerness for subsidies, she calmed his fears of exhausting his own land, and exposing it to jealous neighbours, by remarking that the king was sufficiently secured against these dangers by his alliances, especially if he himself respected them, and kept to his engagements with his well-known loyalty. It required great self-control calmly to overlook such language; but on this occasion, too, the main point was that the king longed to be once more in the field against the Jacobins, and looked forward with deep sorrow to the entire exhaustion of his pecuniary means. To carry on war without subsidies seemed to him simply impossible; if he could obtain these he was ready to recommence the war at once. For the second time he took no notice of the Russian reproaches, and redoubled

his efforts in Vienna and London to obtain a grant of money. His Ministers did not all entertain the same opinions; some had no other object than peace—no other wish than that the financial negotiations should fail. With this view they had made an exaggerated estimate of the sum which Prussia required to complete her armaments;—in all 22,000,000 Prussian dollars for an army of 100,000 men, to which Austria was to contribute three, England nine, and the German Empire ten millions. They did not themselves believe that the whole of this sum would be granted; but they wished, before taking any further steps themselves, to await the proposals and measures of Austria.

Unfortunately the position of affairs in Vienna was still more unfavourable to the great cause of the revolutionary war than in Berlin; the fact was that there were, at the Austrian court, many bitter enemies of France, but very few advocates of an alliance with Prussia. Generally speaking, moreover, the political condition of Austria at this moment was everywhere very critical. In 1792 the Austrian Government, without any serious consideration of means and obstacles, had returned, at the instigation of Spielmann, to the Emperor Joseph's policy of foreign conquest. In April, 1792 they had suddenly paused in this career, because they saw themselves outstripped in it by their Prussian rival; and they proceeded to protest against it, without foreseeing that they would thereby deprive themselves of Prussian support against France, and thus imperil their own aggrandizement. Austria was thus brought into an insecure and difficult position, suffering at home from exhaustion and bitter party strife, and threatened from without by continually increasing dangers. The Emperor, assailed on all sides by the most various and contradictory advice, distrustful of himself and everybody else, and incompetent from his dislike of work to form an independent judgment, could come to no resolution. He knew, indeed, in general that he wished to extend his dominions, to defeat his enemies, to humble, or

at any rate to annoy, his rivals; he wished, therefore, to continue the war against the French until he had taken from them a large province, and resisted for the present, with stubborn tenacity every attempt to promote a peace But he was utterly at a loss for the means to accomplish his objects; he held audiences and conferences every morning from early dawn, without ever forming any settled opinion, nay without even gaining a clear understanding of the state of things. And thus, disgusted with labour, he sank more and more into a state of melancholy and *ennui*, against which he was utterly unprotected by any taste for the fine arts or more serious studies; so that the Empress, a clever lively and energetic woman, often looked about her in a sort of despair for suitable means of amusing him—fireworks, menageries, local jests, &c. The Emperor's former tutor, Count Francis Colloredo, was the more eager in supporting her in this endeavour, because, being quite unable to solve the problems of political life himself, he saw his influence greatly on the wane. With lively though silent vexation he observed that the Emperor's favour was returning to his old friend, the adjutant Rollin, a reserved and taciturn man, whom some regarded as honest and narrowminded, others as deep and designing. This man became indispensable to the Emperor, whose deference to his favourite's wishes was doubly increased, when the latter, on one occasion, threatened to leave the court in consequence of a momentary predominance of Colloredo's influence. Thus confirmed in his position, Rollin by degrees obtained the entire conduct of military affairs; the old rivalry between Lascy's and Laudon's schools, between the court war-council and Coburg's staff, was completely thrown into the shade by his influence. Rollin excluded General Lascy from employment, with the same obstinate hatred as he persecuted Coburg and Mack. His *protégé* in the autumn of 1793 was General Wurmser, whose plans of conquest against Alsace he supported with the greatest zeal, and thereby openly threw down the gauntlet

to the Russian Government. In other respects, however, he troubled himself little about politics in the narrower sense, and left the field of diplomacy exclusively to Thugut, with whom he was on intimate terms.

The latter, who had risen, as we have seen, as an opponent of Prussia and friend of Russia, had resolutely adhered to his predilections. He had, indeed, the vexation of seeing that Russia was at last compelled to consent to the Prussian-Polish treaty of cession; but, on the other hand, he had the satisfaction of knowing that Suboff had signified to count Cobenzl the Emperor's full consent to the conquest of Alsace and Lorraine for Austria; or, if it pleased the latter better, to the exchange of these countries for Bavaria. And as the English, too, had no objection to such a scheme, Thugut consented, on the 18th of December, 1793, to give the Empress Catharine an explicit statement of the claims of Austria. He gave up, with reluctance, the idea of a complete partition of Poland, but still reserved to himself a rectification of the frontiers of Galicia. He was likewise prepared, at least as far as Prussia was concerned, to accede to the treaty of January 23d, in which, as we may remember, Russia promised to support the Belgian-Bavarian Exchange. He then demanded the French territories of Flanders, Artois and Picardy on the one side, and Lorraine and Alsace on the other. But as, in the existing state of warlike operations, and with the small reliance to be placed on Prussia, the conquest of these provinces was extremely problematical, he demanded the annexation of the Venetian territories, according to the old arrangement of 1782, although both Imperial courts were living at the time in a state of the greatest peace with the harmless Republic of Venice. Lastly he proposed that Russia should guarantee armed assistance against Prussia, in case the latter should in any way trouble the Emperor by her hostility. On this account he was very anxious that Russia should postpone her attack on Turkey until the conclusion of the French war; but he gave the

most distinct promise, that, after this period, he would support the Russian plans in the East with all the resources of the Austrian Empire.

If we consider all these points in their connexion with one another, we shall obtain a clear insight into Thugut's whole political system. Since the friendship of England and Russia was only to be preserved by a vigorous prosecution of the French war, he is prepared to make a new venture in arms; but in return demands, in case of victory, no less then five French provinces. He is, indeed, far from being confident of success, and therefore marks out for himself in the event of failure another victim, in the unarmed Republic of Venice, and tries to secure for Austria, subsequently to a peace with France, the possession of the Turkish border lands. There was, indeed, sufficient ground for his doubts, if the armed assistance of Prussia was to be withheld in the approaching campaign; and to obtain this aid, by means of the subsidy demanded by the King of Prussia Thugut would on no account consent. In accordance with the above mentioned suggestion of the King, he had, indeed, sent Count Lehrbach to Berlin, but had only empowered him to listen to the proposals of Prussia, and to press for the co-operation of the Prussian forces; not, as he significantly said in Lehrbach's instructions, that we expect any efficient support, but because the return home of the Prussian army, while our troops are fighting far away in Belgium, would expose the Hereditary lands of the Emperor to too great danger.

And thus, while the French preparations were being carried on on a more and more colossal scale, the further co-operation of Prussia was becoming in the highest degree improbable. Had then Austria any prospect of making up for Prussia's withdrawal by increased exertions on her own part? Her leading statesmen were the last to flatter themselves with such a hope. The French, indeed, were incessantly proclaiming to the world, that under their banner a

free people was contending against the slavish hordes of despotic monarchies; but Thugut knew only too well that he did not possess one tenth part of that unlimited power with which the Committee of Public Safety drove its subjects to the shock of battle. In reality the Austrian Government at that time could only freely dispose of the population of Bohemia. In the Archduchy and Steiermark, in Carinthia and the Tyrol, they had to consult the provincial Estates, which they had hitherto been accustomed to treat as nonentities, but were now for several reasons inclined to consider worthy of respect. Democratic plots were discovered in Vienna itself; high legal officials began to talk in their regular reports of the "inborn rights of man;" and the secret police of the post-office read in innumerable letters expressions of wrath against the war, the taxes, and the policy of the court. In this state of the public mind, the Government feared to make new demands upon the country; nor would they have got much by asking, since the national resources had been greatly exhausted, and the last severe conscription in the Archduchy had produced only two thousand men.

There remained the two richest countries of the crown lands, Belgium and Hungary. Both, as we know, had energetically resisted the encroachments of Joseph on their constitution; and to both Leopold had made concessions—to the former very essential, and to the latter very comprehensive ones; and neither could now be subjected to the burdens of war, without the free consent of their Estates. After long and difficult negotiations the Belgian lands did indeed grant large sums of money—a tax of eight, and a loan of fifteen, millions; in other respects, however, their relation to the Government was extremely uneasy and mutually irritating. Their new Stadtholder General, the Archduke Charles, had attempted, by the advice of his Minister, Count Metternich, to govern on popular principles, had removed all Joseph's Imperialist officials, and given their

places to the former leaders of the insurrection, and had given up all interference with ecclesiastical and communal affairs. The clergy and the nobility, consequently, overflowed at first with grateful loyalty, but showed themselves doubly irritable and haughty, if Count Metternich also dared, for once, to have a will of his own; and as this could not always be avoided, he was soon obliged to hear from noble mouths that the Government of the French Jacobins had been far more honourable and profitable than his own. On the other hand every post from Vienna brought him distinct reproofs from the Ministry for his unworthy weakness. Count Trautmansdorf—a brother-in-law of Prince Colloredo, from whom, however, he was separated by a family quarrel—who managed the affairs of Belgium in Vienna, was continually urging him to greater firmness, in which he was warmly supported by Thugut; so that both statesmen strengthened one another in the conviction, that it would be the greatest gain for Austria if this eternally restless and endangered country could be got rid of in a creditable manner.

The prospect which met the eyes of the Ministers in Hungary was not more cheering. The storms of Joseph's reign still shook this powerful and excitable country; all classes were resolved to preserve their national privileges, and not to allow the Crown the smallest degree of arbitrary power. Out of deference to this feeling, the Government had subjected them in a very slight degree to the burdens of war; of the 115 battalions of musketeers who were present in Belgium, and in the army of the Rhine, there were not more than thirteen Hungarian. There was now the most urgent need of a great conscription, but this could only be granted by a Diet. It happened that the deputies of several *Comitats* were assembled at Pesth in December; the Emperor sent the *Palatinus* to that city in the hope of gaining a favourable vote: but they, on the contrary, considered that the Hungarian regiments ought to be recalled

from the army, unless the Emperor summoned a Diet. That the constitution was a reality was soon shown, when the Government appealed to the good will of individuals, called upon them for contributions of money, and opened recruiting bureaus. The *Comitats* immediately declared the collection of contributions illegal, and the *Comitat* of Czemplin proceeded to inflict exemplary punishment on Count Almasi, who had handed over some of his peasants to the Emperor's recruiting officers against their will. Under these circumstances Rollin, influenced above all by the need of soldiers, proposed to issue writs for a Diet. But all the political influences of the court, without exception, rose in opposition to his scheme. Foremost came the clergy represented by Count Colleredo. The bishops had been guilty of many arbitrary acts, and apprehended the complaints of Protestants and Greeks against themselves, if a Diet should be summoned; and they therefore offered the Emperor a munificent present of money, if he would spare the country the pest of a revolutionary Diet. Thugut, who was neither bigotted nor timid, and therefore little influenced by the apprehensions of the clergy, feared on his own part that the personality of the king was little suited to control the proud and audacious Magyar nobility. He felt, moreover, but little interest in the subject, because the object in calling the Diet—the procuring more extended means of war—was indifferent to him. The proposal was, therefore, shelved, the German and Bohemian lands were subjected to a new war-tax which immediately produced very peaceable sentiments in the Viennese public; and the voluntary recruiting in Hungary was strictly confined within legal limits. The result, as very soon appeared, was insignificant. In regard to foreign policy, exactly the same feeling prevailed in Hungary as in 1790—a feeling of indignation that the old Turkish hereditary enemy had been allowed to escape by the advice of Prussia. Nobles and peasants were still agreed in thinking that the French had done no injury to

the Magyars, and that the latter would rather fight the Prussians than the French; and lastly, that there was only one war in which Hungary would joyfully engage—a war against the Turks.

Considering all things, therefore, the Austrian Government could not think of rivalling the French Republic in the display of its resources. When they surveyed the more distant horizon, they saw that in Italy they were on the worst footing with Piedmont; the two States mutually upbraided each other for neglecting the duties of allies, and Thugut was just sending an almost threatening *ultimatum* to Turin, in which he demanded, as the price of further military aid, the restoration of territory which had been ceded to Savoy in the Austrian War of Succession. In the German Empire, as usual, there was nothing but rivalry and jealousy among the Estates, as to who should most successfully escape the burdens of war. Holland was full of ill-feeling towards Austria, and now openly demanded, as the price of continuing to join in the war, that the Emperor should cede to the Dutch the forts Lillo and Liefkenshoek near Antwerp, and a district between Roermond and Maestricht. The Government at Vienna would listen to nothing of the kind; and in this quarter too, as everywhere else, arrived at purely negative results.

If we survey this long series of impossibilities—impossibility that the French, who could not be overwhelmed in the autumn of 1793, *before* the beginning of their great armament, should be conquered now *after* its completion—impossibility of gaining any effectual aid from the German Empire, Italy, or Holland—impossibility of Austria's increasing her own military forces in any considerable degree—there can remain no doubt, that a far-seeing and calculating mind could only refuse the subsidy to Prussia, and thereby reject all Prussian aid, with a decided indifference to the French war, and with feelings which made it regard many other

interests as infinitely more important than a victory over the Jacobins. And we cannot doubt that such feelings existed in full force in the mind of Thugut. To please the Empress Catharine he was prepared to take part in the approaching campaign, and had, for the present, no objection to make, if unexpected successes could be obtained with the existing means. But he had no intention of making new exertions for the attainment of this object; for if it should prove impossible to conquer Alsace, he now hoped to annex the Venetian States instead. If he were compelled to conclude a disadvantageons peace with France, and perhaps to give up Belgium, he hoped to console himself with the spoils of Turkey. He could soon reconcile himself to a moderate increase of the power of France, if only the main object, the humiliation of his Prussian rival, could be effected. The intensity of Thugut's dislike towards the latter country increased with every hour. In the beginnig of the year 1794, the evil tidings of Wurmser's defeat on the Rhine arrived in Vienna. The effect produced was immense. For the moment ever the star of Rollin was obscured by the disaster of his friend; and he was not able, in opposition to Lascy and Prince Colloredo, to prevent the dismissal of the old general. But Thugut was fully persuaded that the only cause of the heavy calamity was the treachery—the open systematic treachery—of the Prussian generals; and that the Duke of Brunswick had a criminal understanding with the French. He was confirmed in this, as we know, groundless suspicion, by Lehrbach's despatches from Berlin, which repeatedly affirmed that Prussia had secretly come to a friendly unterstanding with France. The Emperor was no less deeply affected by the blow. News had just arrived of the fall of Toulon. Francis received the Prussian ambassador Lucchesini with sorrowful aspect. "I cannot", said he, "complain of others, for I have myself committed great blunders and am ashamed of myself." He then spoke of the duty of all sovereigns to stand by one another in this great

danger. He was, indeed, unable even then to throw off completely his hereditary dislike; "I assure you," he said, "that I have at this moment laid aside all jealousy against Prussia; when we have peace again, every one can do what he wishes, but now we must act in harmony." The substance of this lamentation, therefore, showed that as soon as any other opening appeared he would again withdraw from Prussia. A few days afterwards he was once more irritated by the demand of Prussia, that her troops should for the present be supported by the Western Circles of the Empire, until the settlement of the subsidy question; and by her suggestion that the Emperor should join with her in bringing forward a proposal to this effect in the Diet at Ratisbon. Francis saw in this common action a degradation of his Imperial dignity, and therefore declined the request; and he was doubly enraged when Prussia proceeded to bring forward the motion at Ratisbon on her own account. Colloredo added fuel to the fire, and declared that Austria might carry on a most energetic war against France, and yet entirely dispense with Prussian help; she must, he said, learn of her enemy, and set on foot in the German empire—what was unfortunately impossible in Hungary on account of the constitution—a general arming of the people, a levy of all the citizens and peasants *en masse*. The Emperor, who, like the King of Prussia, was heartily desirous of war, was highly delighted with the proposal, and immediately sent off the necessary orders to the Austrian ambassador at Ratisbon. The effect produced was like that of a shell breaking through the ceiling of a quiet room. Such a revolutionary step appeared inconceivable in the deep-rutted road of the imperial constitution, and utterly destructive of all the traditional order of the empire. Prussia, seeing that this measure would render the provisioning of her troops impossible, entered a decided protest, and had an unusual majority on her side. But all these hindrances made no impression on the highly excited Vice

Chancellor of the empire. He employed all the learning of his journalists to prove that his plan was agreeable to the constitution, and he was never tired of representing with what mighty masses of men the array of the German nation would march to meet the Republicans. In the middle of January, while these negotiations were going on, the youngest uncle of the Emperor, the Elector of Cologne, appeared in Vienna. He naturally suffered great inconvenience in his capital from his close proximity to the theatre of war, and wished to animate the martial zeal of his nephew. On all other questions he was as zealous an opponent of Prussia as Colloredo, but nevertheless considered her cooperation in the French war as altogether indispensable. He was, therefore, highly indignant with Thugut and Rollin, whom he declared to be the authors of the late disaster. He found in Colloredo a strong personal jealousy of Thugut, and endeavoured to transfer the conduct of affairs to the hands of Lascy, who advocated energetic offensive operations.[1] But while his intrigue dragged slowly on, as was usual at this court, an incident occurred which brought the complicated crisis to a sudden termination.

England now made the first of her grand attempts to unite the powers of the continent in a firm league against the gigantic and ever-growing Revolution.

Pitt's ministry, as we have seen, had entered into the war with the greatest reluctance, and had hitherto taken part in it with only half its strength. An army of scarcely 30,000 men maintained in Belgium, the blockade of a few French harbours, a war of privateers against the enemy's commerce, the capture of some West India islands—this was all that the English forces had hitherto effected. Nor had the Government of England shown any superabundance of sagacity or skill. How deplorably had it neglected to support La Vendée and to make use of Toulon!—how shortsight-

[1] Lucchesini to the king of Prussia, Jan. 4th and 28th, Feb. 15th, March 5th.

edly had it helped to bring about the general disasters of the late campaign by the expedition against Dunkirk!—with what narrow greediness had it now again sent off a considerable force on a useless expedition against Guadaloupe or Martinique! When Lord Auckland warned them that there was but one real object of the war—the suppression of the Convention, for which end all existing means should be employed, because every other advantage would follow as a matter of course—the ministers were far from being able to deny it; but the expedition was nevertheless allowed to depart from a fear of incurring the charge of vacillation, and because it was thought that, after the failure at Dunkirk, some other spoils of war must be secured for England. No one would have recognised in these miserable perversities the son of the great Chatham; no one would have seen in him the future leader and arbiter of Europe. But in this case too it was to be shown, that of all human gifts a strong moral will is the highest and most fruitful. When his allies fell off, and his enemies increased in power, then and not till then were the minister and the country fully conscious of the fact that they were at war; and then, when others were longing for the end, they were setting themselves earnestly to the real business of fighting. The armaments by land and sea were quadrupled, the powers of the Government against internal revolts increased, and the greatest activity directed to the upholding of the European coalition. In St. Petersburg and in Madrid, at the Scandinavian and Italian courts, English diplomacy strained every nerve to resist the progress of the Revolution. To the same end Lord Malmesbury, the most noted of English politicians, was sent to Berlin at the end of December, to offer Prussia any reasonable assistance, if she were really impeded in her movements by want of money. On his way—in Holland and Frankfort—Malmesbury received very discouraging information of the state of feeling at the court of Berlin, and was therefore all the more pleasantly surprised

by the animation with which the king, with all the frankness of an honourable man, expressed his longing for a fresh struggle with the Jacobins. But whenever the English minister inquired into the financial condition of the country, he received the same unsatisfactory answer; the Treasury had been emptied by war and luxury, and the people had been so heavily taxed during the last half century, that desperate outbreaks might be apprehended in case of any further pressure. Upon this Pitt did not hesitate to take another step in advance, and on the 5th of February Malmesbury was empowered to offer Prussia a subsidy of £ 2,000,000—of which England was to furnish two-fifths, and Austria, Holland, and Prussia herself, one fifth each—if she would set on foot an army of 100,000 men.[1] This offer was indeed far below the original Prussian claim of 22,000,000 Thalers; but the king nevertheless signified his assent, after some negotiation, and the treaty was provisionally signed on the 12th, on condition of obtaining the assent of Austria and Holland. As there had never been any doubt with respect to the latter country, everything depended on the decision of the Emperor. The question was now put to him—whether, in consideration of the sum of £ 400,000, he was willing to keep an army of 100,000 men in the field against France. The question was backed by a simultaneous announcement from the Prince of Coburg, that he had agreed with the English in a common plan of operation for the approaching campaign, in accordance with the views of Mack, but that he should require a reinforcement of 37,000 men, not merely for the purposes of offence, but to enable him even to guarantee the

[1] It is a characteristic circumstance that the diplomatists of Vienna declared that this arrangement originated with Prussia, and was not considered acceptable in England. The English ambassador at Vienna, who was entirely won over by Thugut, was fully possessed by this view of the case. This excellent statesman regarded the Austrian minister as an openhearted, candid, and entirely trustworthy man!

defence of the country.[1] Thus urged on every side, the court of Vienna was compelled to come to a decision.

This decision had already been arrived at by those who now sat at the helm of the Austrian State. The all important fact was, that the real guide of Austrian diplomacy at this period, Count Thugut, hated and feared Prussia, his ally, far more than his adversary, France.[2] From a military point of view the recall of the Prussian army from the theatre of war appeared a great calamity; but Thugut, whose dislike of Prussia had, since November, been growing continually stronger, had now no more eager wish than the breaking up of this army. Perhaps he would have consented to pay something for a few Prussian regiments, if they were placed under the command of an Austrian general. But an independent Prussian army seemed to him to be the greatest possible evil for Austria—especially in her present position on the middle Rhine—because it lay between the main body of the Imperialists in Belgium and their Austrian homes. His bitter hatred of Prussia led him to think the King and his Ministry capable of the worst possible designs—complicity with France, and even plans for attacking Austrian provinces. For this reason alone he would have wished to recall his own troops from Belgium to Bohemia, and would joyfully have contributed to break up the Prussian army: we may imagine, therefore, how decidedly he refused to pay even a single florin towards its support. The Russian ambassador expressed his entire approval of these views in the name of his Government—the same Government which shortly before had sent so emphatic a summons to Prussia to continue the war against France. On the 27th of February, Thugut sent a new explanation of the state of things to

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[1] As nothing came of this plan, we shall not enter into particulars. These may be found in Witzleben III 51 et. seq. — [2] The following particulars are taken from the despatches of Sir Morton Eden, (in the State Paper office, London) and of Thugut, (archives of Vienna).

St. Petersburg, which betrayed from beginning to end the increase of his wrath against Prussia. As before, he declared himself ready to continue the war against France, if the Powers would guarantee a sufficient compensation to the Emperor, and secure him against the malice of Prussian policy. He would, he said, after the unfortunate turn of affairs, considerably moderate his claims to French territory, but must, all the more, insist on being allowed full freedom of action in regard to the extent of his acquisitions in Venetia. He promised Catharine efficient aid against Turkey, but earnestly entreated her not to commence operations against that country before the termination of the war with France. For otherwise, if the Russian army were on the Danube, and the Austrian at the same time on the Rhine, the Prussians would be enabled to extend their power, without fear or shame, in Germany and Poland. He, therefore, repeated his request that Russia, with a view to putting a check on Prussian greed, would keep a large force in Poland; and he expressed the inmost feelings of his heart in these words: "It would really be a fortunate thing if Prussia, by some open act of hostility, would give us an opportunity of bringing down this perfidious Power to her proper level."

It needs no arguments to prove that this desire of Thugut's—not merely to protect himself from Prussia, but to attack her in concert with Russia—could not possibly coexist with a lively zeal for the war against France. He was completely blinded by fear and anger, and was as far as possible from the truth in his judgment of the Prussian government, which had, it is true, but little desire to make fresh exertions against France, but at the same time had no hostile intentions against Austria. Penetrated, however, with these sentiments, Thugut naturally regarded the fate of Belgium and the Rhine with indifference. As he daily expected an attack on Bohemia, he preferred, as a matter of course, to sacrifice Brussels to leaving the road to Vienna unprotected.

He could not, indeed, immediately and openly avow his intentions. Independently of other obstacles, he had to deal with the sentiments of the Emperor, who manifested no inclination to make peace with the Jacobins; but, on the contrary, was just now inspired with double zeal by Colloredo for the struggle against the French. Some weeks before, Count Mercy, formerly ambassador in Paris, had proposed, in a letter from Belgium,[1] that the Emperor should go in person to that country, assume the command of the grand allied army, and thereby bring fresh life into its movements. Francis had joyfully seized on this idea, which promised him the excitement of a journey in an unknown country, and, as was to be hoped, abundance of warlike laurels. Inspired by these sentiments he had assented to Mack's above-mentioned plan for the campaign—which comprised an advance upon Paris—even before it had been communicated to the English for their approval. His views, therefore, differed widely from those of Thugut; and if he had possessed any degree of penetration or consistency he would have accepted Malmesbury's offer with eagerness. But on this occasion Prince Colloredo, without intending it, rendered his rival Thugut the most effectual assistance. His project of a general arming of the people could not indeed be carried out; "never mind," said he, "we can still do without the Prussians." He represented that there were only about 60,000 Prussian soldiers on the Rhine; of which the Emperor could, at all events, count on 13,000 as the federal contingent, and 20,000 in virtue of the February compact; the deficit, he said, might be easily supplied, if the contingents of the other Estates of the Empire were collected with sufficient energy, and united into one grand federal army. The objection was made that these loose

1 This plan had already been mooted but had been frustrated by the opposition of the Empress.

ingredients would not be under arms before the autumn;[1] to which he replied, that during this interval the Prussians might he kept in the field, even without a subsidy. It was further remarked that some of those forces were already in Coburg's army, and that the latter would therefore be weakened by the formation of an Army of the Empire. Colloredo consoled the objectors by saying, that in the worst case they must for the moment suspend offensive operations in Belgium; that the English would use every effort to prevent the French from getting the upper hand in that country; and that Russia would be sure to procure some other territorial acquisition for the Emperor of Austria. By this course Francis saw the two strongest wishes of his heart, at that period, fully satisfied—the journey to Belgium, and the rejection of Prussian aid; he therefore acceded to Colloredo's proposal with great satisfaction, and made known his resolution to Coburg on the 12th of February—the very day on which Malmesbury signed his compact in Berlin. The fall of the English negotiation was thus sealed beforehand; and Thugut had the satisfaction of seeing the only means of carrying on the war destroyed by the war party itself.

Hereupon Thugut and Colloredo informed the Marquis Lucchesini that Austria was not in a condition to make the smallest contribution to the Prussian subsidy. Lucchesini had received orders in this case to announce that the Prussian army would march away from the Rhine homewards, unless Austria had come to a more favourable conclusion by the 15th of March. But on the 28th of February the Austrian minister assured the Prussian ambassador that he need not wait so long, as the Emperor's resolution was

[1] How well-founded this apprehension was is proved by every page of Vivenot's work (*Herzog Albrecht von Sachsen-Teschen*) which, however, does not prevent the author from considering Colloredo's policy, and the rejection of the Anglo-Prussian scheme, highly laudable.

irrevocable; that Austria was prepared for all contingencies, and only demanded of the king 20,000 men, in accordance with the treaty of February. Lucchesini soon became aware of the amount of deep antipathy by which this decree was dictated and upheld. When the report of these stringent measures spread through the city of Vienna, and the envoys of the petty sovereigns of the Empire—who already saw with the mind's eye the Prussians retiring, and the defenceless territories of the Empire inundated with French soldiers—hastened in their fears to Thugut, he consoled them by declaring that Prussia with these 100,000 men would have attacked—not the French—but the lands of the ecclesiastical Princes; that the Emperor's refusal had therefore saved the Empire from this danger for the present; and that it was now above all things necessary to raise a large Army of the Empire, which would for the future inspire respect into French and Prussians alike.

The intelligence of this momentous resolution spread rapidly through Europe, and agitated the minds of men in a different, but everywhere in a very violent, manner. In Berlin it was taken as a matter of course that the troops must leave the Rhine; and on the 11th of March orders were sent to General Möllendorf—who had succeeded Brunswick at the beginning of the year—to march back to Cologne, and thence to Westphalia. Nevertheless, the desire of the king to continue the contest against the Revolution survived even this severe blow. Immediately after the arrival of the Vienna dispatch, he had asked the opinion of each of his cabinet ministers respecting his future policy, and had received answers essentially differing from one another. Count Alvensleben, who had always manifested a stronger antipathy to Austria than to the French, was in favour of recalling the whole army, conciliating the Russians by abandoning Turkey, and making peace as quickly as possible with the French Republic. Count Haugwitz, on the other hand, represented that as the king still considered

himself bound to the common cause of Europe, he ought now, after the refusal of Austria, to come to an understanding with England and Holland alone; that while the 20,000 men claimed by Austria remained on the Upper Rhine, a force of 50,000 men should be placed at the disposal of the maritime Powers at Wesel, in consideration of a suitable subsidy, in order to defend Westphalia and Holland, and possibly to exercise a decisive influence on the war in Belgium. The king did not hesitate for a moment between these two views. He immediately empowered Count Haugwitz to open a fresh negociation with Malmesbury in accordance with his opinions. As early as the 7th of March the two statesmen held their first conference; and Malmesbury, although he had no special powers for such a case, held out such favourable prospects, that the king sent a fresh order to Möllendorf on the 14th, to the effect that he was, indeed, to lead the troops—with the exception of the 20,000 men—to Cologne, but was to remain there, as in all probability the king in person would undertake a new expedition into Belgium from that city.

From the nature of the case no communication could be made to a third party respecting these plans, before the final ratification of the English treaty. The excitement and terror therefore continued to increase in the territories of the Empire on the Upper Rhine, when the Prussian regiments broke up their quarters and prepared for their retreat. Of the Army of the Empire, of which so much had been said, nothing was at present to be seen; the Austrian troops, in the command of which Wurmser had been succeeded by General Brown, recovered very slowly from the disasters of December; and the people generally foresaw with horror, that the devastation of the Palatinate would be carried over the Rhine deep into the heart of Germany. The generals at Coburg's head-quarters in Belgium sympathized in these feelings. Previously, in the year 1793, they had laid the greatest weight on an operation of the Prussians from the

side of the Palatinate against the Saare and the Upper Meuse, as the most effectual diversion in favour of the war in Belgium. Instead of this, they now looked forward to seeing a portion of the French Moselle army operating against the Lower Meuse and the eastern flank of the allied army in Belgium; while the army of the Rhine might take up on a larger scale the part played by Custine in 1792—overwhelm Mayence, deluge the Rhenish lands from that city to Cologne, and completely surround the Belgian army. Coburg had expressed these views in his answer to the Emperor's letter respecting the formation of an army of the Empire, to which the Emperor replied: "I have taken note of the Prince's letter, and his objections will never divert me from the resolution, according to which the army of the Empire is to operate independently." The Prince likewise received an answer, exactly in accordance with the views of Colloredo, with respect to Mack's plan for the campaign; to the effect that the latter was under the influence of many illusions, from which it was necessary, in the interests of the great cause, to free the mind of the Prince; that the Emperor could not send any further reinforcements from his hereditary lands, and that all proposals of the kind, which could only serve to annoy him, should accordingly be discontinued; that if an attack upon France was thus rendered impossible, it was a thing greatly to be regretted, indeed, but to be borne with submission as a decree of Providence; and that the struggle was to be confined to the defensive. The Prince was further charged to appeal to the allied maritime Powers for increased aid, since Austria was already doing everything that lay within human power, and was about to prove the greatness of her zeal by the fact, that the Emperor himself would repair to Belgium at the end of March, and undertake the command in chief.

The Prince of Coburg, notwithstanding his dissent as a Prince of the Empire, was a thorough Austrian at heart, always ready to take the word of his Emperor as inspired

truth, and to respect all the orders of the cabinet with obedient devotion. But on this occasion he was deeply moved, and in complete despair. He had in all more than 160,000 men under his command, a very considerable force, consisting entirely of excellent troops, with which a general of the Napoleon stamp would perhaps have considered himself invincible under any circumstances. The Prince was not wanting in the simple courage of a soldier, and had often enough stood his ground with perfect calmness in the midst of a shower of bullets; but he was crushed by the weight of responsibility, which he was not capable of lightening, either by frivolous unconcern, or creative genius. He only saw his own deficiencies and the increasing dangers to which he was exposed—the long frontier from Luxemburg to Ostend, which he might perhaps have to defend against double numbers, and the inundation of the Rhine frontier on his flank and rear by the French, after the withdrawal of the Prussians; he was at a loss which way to turn, and the generals about him, as well as the staff of the straightforward but weak-minded Duke of York, were just as depressed as the Prince himself. In a fresh council of war at Brussels, it was at last resolved to open the campaign from Valenciennes—that is from the centre of the allied army—by an attack upon the neighbouring fortress of Landrecy; while Clerfait was to cover Flanders on the right of that place, and Kaunitz the river Sambre, to the left. "Your Majesty will be pleased to consider," wrote Coburg to the Emperor on this occasion, "what it is to have to make up our minds to besiege Landrecy, only because our position would become far more unfortunate if we remained inactive;—what it is to be obliged to say to oneself, that success is almost impossible, because the enemy is in vastly superior force; I could wish that those who have counselled your Majesty in Vienna, and frustrated all our plans, may be able to answer for it before God, your Majesty and the world, but I very much doubt whether

they will ever be able to do so." He appealed in equally strong terms to Möllendorf, to the Dutch Government and to Malmesbury, in order to obtain at least a postponement of the withdrawal of the Prussians from Mayence; nay, at his instigation, the Archduke Charles resolved on the extraordinary step of going on his own account to Vienna, and making a last attempt in person to bring about a change in the prevailing system. Coburg had already twice begun a letter to the Emperor resigning his command. But at the last moment, he could never find sufficient independence, or selfishness, to turn his back upon his Emperor and his troops in the hour of danger; and remained, at last, in the silent and faithful submission of a soldier at his post, where he expected nothing but humiliation for himself and defeat for his army.

Meanwhile affairs in Vienna, once forced into the downward road, moved on by their own weight. In the sphere of politics, after the refusal of the Anglo-Prussian treaty, the Oriental question naturally threw French affairs more and more into the background; and the natural consequence was, that all the complaints of Coburg only served to make men regard him as troublesome, and unsuited for his position. They demanded of him an energetic prosecution of the war, and splendid triumphs, and at the same time obstinately refused him all reinforcements, although they had, besides the necessary garrisons, more then 70,000 men at their disposal, and ready for action, in the interior of the country. But Thugut thought that he must keep this force near at hand, as a defence against the dreaded attack of the Prussians. It is true that while Malmesbury's negotiations were in progress, such an attack was not to be apprehended; and therefore Coburg might for the present try his fortune against the French. But Thugut would not trust his Prussian ally for a single week, and was fully determined on no account to expose the hereditary dominions to an attack. When now the Archduke Charles most unexpectedly

arrived at Vienna, the Emperor was at first greatly alarmed; but after he had learnt the object of his visit, he only treated him very ungraciously, begged him not to interfere in his policy, and invited him quietly to return to Belgium with him after the lapse of three days. The Imperial brothers started on the 31st of March; on the following day Vienna was surprised by the intelligence, that the Emperor, when in Linz, had suddenly summoned the Prince of Waldeck, who had been destined for a command in Italy, to his head-quarters in Belgium. Waldeck was a brave officer, who had lost an arm in the French war; a man of reserved but resolute character, strong party feeling and unprincipled ambition, little to be depended upon by his friends, but highly dangerous to his enemies. He had never made any secret of his enmity against Coburg and Mack; the summons sent to him at this important moment proved that Rollin too, in the new position of affairs, had for once yielded to the influence of Thugut even in a military question.

Whilst the chiefs in the midst of their mighty armies in Belgium were more and more unanimously inclining towards peace, the clouds of a new war-tempest were gathering more and more thickly and darkly in the far East. One Russian regiment after another marched from Poland to Volhynia, and it was already considered certain that the army of reserve, in the rear of Dolgoruki's and Suworow's troops, was to be raised to the number of 70,000 men. The negotiation with England for a definitive treaty of alliance was still carried on, but always stopped short at the same point—the English demand of a Russian corps for the war against France. Catharine remained stedfast in her previous system of opposing the French by diplomacy, but not by active warfare. And even this system had to be suited to the altered position of affairs. It is true that Catharine incessantly urged Prussia to the contest against the Jacobins, but she was quite satisfied that Austria should adopt na exactly opposite course. Nay, she was angry when

England attempted to unite the two German Powers in the coalition against France, and when Malmesbury placed the Prussian army at the disposal of Austria for so insignificant a subsidy. When the news of this affair arrived at St. Petersburg, Markoff cried out, that no such proposal ought to have been made to Austria, and observed that Malmesbury always showed a talent for disturbing the most satisfactory relations. At the very same time that the Emperor Francis was declining the offers of England, a grand Council of ministers was held in St. Petersburg to consider the question of peace or war with Turkey. The vice-chancellor Ostermann and Count Besborodko declared the outbreak of hostilities to be the greatest calamity which could befall Russia in her present condition. Suboff and Markoff, on the contrary, expressed exactly opposite views, and maintained them with a firmness resulting from the certainty of Imperial support. In fact Besborodko soon afterwards, about the middle of March, obtained leave of absence for several weeks, and Ostermann, with many complaints, withdrew from all active business. The plan which was sanctioned by the Empress, and declared by Markoff to be infallible, was to take up a defensive attitude on the frontier of the country with large forces, and at the same time to deal the decisive blow against Constantinople by means of the fleet. The heart of the Osman empire being thus struck, the Russians hoped that they should possess themselves without difficulty of the dissevered limbs.

At this moment, however, a catastrophe occurred, which, though foreseen by thousands, took the potentates of Europe completely by surprise, crossed all their previous plans, and directed the thoughts of friend and foe into new channels.

CHAPTER III.

REVOLT OF POLAND.

SIEVERS GOVERNS POLAND.—HE IS RECALLED.—PATRIOTIC CONSPIRACY IN POLAND.—KOSCIUSKO.—PARTIES IN BERLIN.—MALMESBURY'S NEGOTIATION.—TREATY OF THE HAGUE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA.—REVOLT IN POLAND. MADALINSKI.—KOSCIUSKO RAISES HIS STANDARD IN CRACOW.—BATTLE OF RACLAWICZE.—SUCCESSFUL RISING IN WARSAW.—REVOLT IN LITHUANIA.—PRUSSIAN PREPARATIONS.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA GOES TO POLAND.

THE Polish Diet, after having signed the treaty of submission to Russia, sat at Grodno for about four weeks in great official activity. Under the able wise and tutelary guidance of the Russian ambassador, a new constitution was drawn up, a reorganization of the provinces accepted, and the administration of the courts of law and the finances entirely remodelled. In short, if you listened to Sievers, it would seem that a new and happy age of prosperity was about to dawn on the Polish Republic. It is true that this peaceful structure rested upon crumbling foundations, and Sievers himself, with the best intentions, brought on new convulsions. He knew and despised his former *protégés*, the Confederation of Targowice; he saw how they stirred up hatred and vexation in every part of the country, and he conceived the idea of strengthening the influence of Russia by making use of less odious instruments. No sooner had this change in the mind of the great protector made itself felt, than the national wrath found vent, in the midst of the Diet itself, against the men of Targowice; and in their very last sitting this Assembly annulled all the decrees of the Confederation at a single blow. Unfortunately there was one decree among them, which forbade the wearing of the military crosses of merit obtained during the late struggle against the Russians; this prohibition was therefore swept away with the rest by the resolution of the Diet, and im-

mediately these crosses of merit once more appeared on the breasts of the patriotic Poles. This occurrence gave great offence to the Russian generals, and, in consequence of their report, Catharine resolved to visit this first movement of an incorrigible national feeling with the severest chastisement. She recalled her ambassador, who had not known how to prevent such a scandal; with public marks of disfavour, and entrusted his office to General Igelström, the haughty and dreaded commander of her troops in Poland. She then demanded of the trembling Polish government a signal reparation, the extent of which, however, she left to the penitential feelings of the Poles themselves. The King and the Standing Council, overstepping all their legal functions, proceeded to cancel the decree of the Diet, to renew the order against the offensive crosses, and by a great deputation to implore the pardon of the Empress. After this manifestation of unlimited submission, Catharine was moved to a gracious indulgence, and declared herself satisfied. The horizon of the Polish government was once more cleared, and it could now busy itself with the domestic interests of the country.

But this official polity represented the Polish nation only in name. It rested on the Russian garrisons, which, at the time of the October treaty, amounted to about 40,000 men; but in the nation itself it was surrounded either by herds of utterly indifferent and stupid peasants, or by factions which had no other feeling in their hearts than hatred and thirst of vengeance. In the few larger cities—Wilna and Grodno in Lithuania, and Warsaw and Cracow in the kingdom of Poland—the citizens had not forgotten their short political emancipation in 1791; and the more rapidly and ignominiously their liberties had been trodden under foot, the more warmly did they cherish in their hearts the regretful remembrance of them. In the rural districts, indeed, the majority of the magnates were under Russian protection and in Russian pay; but by their side there was a mass of inferior nobility, who gnashed their teeth at the injuries they had suffered from the war, the continued brutality of the

Russians, and the unexampled degradation of the Polish name. The army, which counted about 30,000 men, shared these feelings to a man. The officers cursed their national disgrace, and the soldiers pined away in misery and hunger; they all looked forward to the possibility of a speedy and entire disbanding, which would leave them without the means of existence, or, what seemed to them far worse, consign them to incorporation with Russian and Prussian regiments.

As early as the summer of 1793 an understanding was come to between these different elements. One of the most influential of the Warsaw merchants, Kapostas, had begun to hold preliminary conferences with General Dzialinski subsequently to the month of May; and, under their direction, a number of young noblemen instituted secret meetings with officers of different regiments, who were sent by their comrades to the capital for this very purpose. These ardent and hotheaded youths soon came to the conviction that a revolt was to be attempted, although they possessed neither money nor materials of war, nor, for the present, any connections with the provinces, or with a single foreign Power. The only question with them was, who was to be the leader in the sacred war; and on this point, too, a decision was soon come to, that there was but one man who possessed at once the necessary capacity, and the confidence of the nation—the hero of Dubienka, Thaddäus Kosciusko. Without any delay they sent an announcement to him to Leipzig—where the General was residing at that time with his friends Ignatius Potocki and Hugo Kollontai, the chiefs of 1791, bewailing the misfortunes of his country, and by no means expecting so early a summons—that he only needed to appear to set all Poland in a blaze. Potocki regarded the information as emanating from a few immature minds, and warned

[1] Ssolowjoff, "*Der Fall Polands*," p. 323. gives many hitherto unknown particulars from later examinations of Kosciusko and Kapostas. In other respects we follow the official papers of the Russian state archives.

Kosciusko against hurling the country into still deeper misery, until some general change should take place in European politics. The heart of Kosciusko, however, firm and considerate as he usually was, beat so high at the prospect opened to him, that he determined at any rate to see with his own eyes. He repaired in the first place to the Cracow frontier, and soon afterwards into the interior of Poland, for the purpose of consulting with General Wodzicki; while his friend and confidant Zajonczek passed over to Warsaw to gather more exact intelligence. The reports of the latter were certainly not encouraging. The wealthier class of citizens, notwithstanding their aversion to the Russians, shrank from all fresh alarms of war; the higher nobility, even those who entertained patriotic feelings, apprehended democratic movements among their own serfs, in case of a revolution. Among the remainder there was restlessness and bitterness enough, but little energy or self-sacrifice. Even amongst the troops Zajonczek found much irritable discontent, indeed, but only two generals, Madalinski and Dzialinski, were prepared under all circumstances to proceed to extremities. He reported to Kosciusko that he could only reckon, with any certainty, upon the army in the country, upon the proletaries in Warsaw, and upon the lower class of nobles in some of the provinces—and no where upon a rising of the peasants. He therefore urgently warned him against making any premature and inauspicious attempt.

But meanwhile Kosciusko's appearance had already borne its fruits. The news of his presence ran with the speed of lightning through the regiments, and, by means of their connections, through the provinces of Ukraine as far as Courland. The excitement among the troops and the nobles rose to an indescribable height; everywhere the secret societies of 1792 were revived, and in a short time 700 societies, with more than 20,000 members, were formed, which bound themselves to a blind obedience for life and death to all the commands of their "great father," as they called Kosciusko. Among so many thousands there was not a single traitor;

the land was suddenly agitated in all its parts by a restless tremor; but the Russians, though they observed it, had simply no handle by which they could lay hold of the plot and its authors. In January intelligence of the French victories at Toulon and Landau arrived at Warsaw, and then, for a moment, the popular joy broke through the veil of caution, and a wild cry of enthusiasm resounded through the whole capital. Whereupon Igelström, who had been for several weeks in a state of anxious alarm, caused a number of persons to be arrested, some of whom were transported to Russia without a trial, and others tormented by long criminal investigations. But the excitement as suddenly subsided again into a gloomy silence, and not a single further clue could be laid hold of. Kosciusko had by this time once more quitted Poland, and, in order to lull the suspicions of the enemy, had undertaken a journey to Italy. He employed this time in cultivating his relations with foreign countries, obtaining money from the Committee of Public Safety, and appealing to Turkey and Sweden for aid. The reports from Poland became every week more favourable. In February the Russian battalions marched in long columns towards the East and South; Igelström had scarcely 20,000 men left, all of whom he collected in and around Warsaw, so that Cracow was almost free from foreign troops, and the nobles of the Palatinate were all in favour of immediate action. In the Ukraine the movement began among the former Polish regiments, which, since the partition, had been taken into the pay of Catharine. These troops were now massed together on the Dniester for the war with Turkey, and, already in almost open mutiny, began to plunder the villages, and make the roads unsafe. In the new Prussian province in the West, the ferment was kept up by Wybinski, the agitator of the previous year, who was busy among the citizens of Posen, Gnesen, and Kalisch. The Clergy, meanwhile, excited in every family religious hatred against the Protestant sovereign; and the well-meant pedantry of the officials irri-

tated the peasants by new and tedious formalities. Hitherto Ignatius Potocki and Kollontai had been unable to believe in the possibility of contending against Russia, but all these coincident movements in the country at last overcame even their scruples; Zajonczek alone continued to protest, and Kosciusko, who trusted in his exact observations, determined to await the development of affairs abroad—especially of the French and Turkish wars—and, in the mean time, to extend his connexions still further through Russian and Prussian Poland. When the flames of war were blazing on the Danube and the Scheldt, then, and not till then, should the avenging people everywhere throw themselves on the foreign garrisons, and in one great hour every clod of Polish soil be appeased by the streaming blood of its oppressors.

Scarcely, however, had these instructions been despatched to the patriotic associations, when Igelström laid the commands of the Empress,—which limited the numbers of the Polish troops to 9,000, and of the Lithuanian to 6,000 men—before the Government at Warsaw, and demanded the immediate dismissal of the rest of the army. The Standing Council declared, as usual, their readiness to obey, but were compelled to use the greatest circumspection in carrying out the decree, as they had simply no means of saving the disbanded soldiers from starvation, and therefore apprehended tumult and robbery. Igelström, it is true, offered to take them into Russian pay, but not a man could be induced to change his colours, and many weeks thus passed, before the Polish Government dared to bring forward the decrees for breaking up the army. This postponement was of vital importance to Kosciusko. For the execution of his great plans he relied chiefly on the regular military force, and its threatened annihilation rendered all further delay impossible. Though the Turks and the French were not yet in the field—though several Polish provinces were still unprepared—Kosciusko was obliged to run the risk with what means he possessed. He warned the Hotspurs of Warsaw, indeed, not

to ruin everything by a premature rising, but on the 6th of March he sent one of his confidants, Piramowitz, to Paris, to inform the Committee of Public Safety of the altered position of affairs, to ask for money and officers, and to fix the 24th as the commencement of the revolt in Cracow. He at the same time excused himself, for not being able at once to come forward on the principles of pure democracy in Poland, saying that he was obliged to rest on the support of the nobility and clergy, and that it was necessary, above all things, to preserve internal harmony. The envoy reached Paris in safety, and received the sanction of the French Committee to all the propositions of the General. They had no objection to the employment of aristocratic forms in Poland; their only object was to gain an accession of military strength against the German Powers; and how serviceable the aid of Poland might be, in this respect, was proved, even before a shot was fired on the Belgian frontier.

For just as the prospect of the contest with Turkey made the Austrian statesmen indifferent to the French war, so the first movement in Poland brought the long vacillations of Prussian policy to a like decision. France, consequently, had the unexampled good fortune, on her entrance into the arena of war, of seeing her great opponents vying with one another in their haste to leave it.

We have already remarked that the king was very eager for the contest with the Jacobins, but that scarcely any of those about his person sympathised in his feelings. Of the Ministers Haugwitz was the only one who did not condemn them; while Finkenstein, Alvensleben, and Geusau, the Minister at War, listened to the King in perfect despair, as he indulged in dreaming of the scenes of the next Belgian or Rhenish campaign. What was of still more importance, the personal confidants of the monarch, Lucchesini and Manstein, entirely agreed with the views of the Ministers. The King's warlike ardour appeared to them almost like a romantic vision, which must vanish at the stern

touch of reality. And, in fact, the Prussian Government was at present in a thoroughly false and untenable position. To continue the war with France, and at the same time to remain on the present ill terms with Austria, was a contradiction in itself; the evil consequences of which Prussia was by no means strong enough to bear. There was evidently but one choice. Either the King must forego his French laurels, or make any, not *too* intolerable, sacrifices to restore the alliance with Austria. Unfortunately the King wanted the strength of mind to resign himself to the inevitable, or even to recognize the necessity of so doing. He felt that he was in the right as against Austria, and he had good reasons for not sacrificing either Bavaria or Poland to her; but he could not be made to see, that in this case no real understanding could be come to, and that, consequently, the continuance of the French war was a folly. As long as he remained in this mood, the sober and relentless common sense of Manstein had the decided advantage over him. After the breach with Austria, all the nearest and most practical interests of the monarchy called for peace. At home there was the exhaustion of the treasury, and the apathy of the provinces; abroad, the untrustworthiness of Catharine, and the undisguised enmity of Thugut. This was evidently not the position of affairs in which to stake the last drop of blood for the sake of such allies, in an unpromising struggle against the French. There was, indeed, another point, from which a clearer eye might have taken a very different view of affairs; the armaments of the Committee of Public Safety might have revealed to the genuine statesman the infinite danger which the nascent military dictatorship was preparing for our quarter of the globe. When this was once understood, that which under usual circumstances might appear madness, would be the highest wisdom; to escape Jena and Tilsit, the most painful concessions should have been made to Austria. But such reflections only occurred to a few English statesmen and French *Emigrés;*

neither in Austria nor Prussia do we find a trace of such thoughts among any of the men in power. "No doubt," wrote Manstein to Tauenzien at this time, "our cooperation against the French is very desirable, but it must not be given at our expense, for that would be to sacrifice ourselves for the common good, which would be absurd." He was well pleased, however, that the negotiation respecting the subsidies should go on, because Prussia and Germany would certainly obtain a more favourable peace in Paris, the more thoroughly they continued to be armed. He thought that when once the money was obtained, the army should remain on the Rhine to protect the German Empire with full force, while the King—if possible in concert with England and Germany—should secretly find out what terms France was inclined to offer for the attainment of peace. As a channel for such offers, an agent, formerly employed in Paris, named Cetto, had already started for that city in January.[1]

In his master's present mood Manstein could not directly check the impatience with which Frederick William opened the fresh negotiation with Lord Malmesbury; but the warm and impetuous zeal of the King for war was by no means to his taste. He therefore threw every possible hindrance in the way of the negotiations, but was for the moment completely unhorsed by a skilful thrust of the English diplomatist. Malmesbury, who was a great amateur in the knowledge and treatment of individual characters and moods —a clever, bold, and proud adept in the art of influencing important affairs by insignificant means—had made use of Haugwitz's jealousy against his colleagues, and had suggested to him to transfer the whole negotiation to the Hague, and for this purpose to go with him to Holland. The King, who consented to every thing which might procure the means for a new campaign, repeatedly expressed to Malmesbury his

[1] Manstein to Möllendorf Feb. 24. to Vieregg, Jan. 18. (*Staatsarchiv* at Munich.) (Möllendorf's Correspondenz) Posch

desire of taking the command of the army in person, and sent orders to Möllendorf, as we have seen, to lead the troops away from Mayence, indeed, but not further than Cologne, where the King would probably join him and lead the army over into Belgium.

Perhaps if these instructions had been carried out immediately, no obstacle would have deterred the King from his purpose. But unfortunately, after the Austrian refusal, Lord Malmesbury was without any instructions from his Government, and had opened the new negotiation at his own risk and responsibility. He was on the whole sure of the assent of his Ministers, if he succeeded in keeping Prussia to the Coalition; but, on the other hand, he did not at all know what Pitt thought about the details of the war, or how he would employ the Prussian army after the conclusion of the compact. During his journey to the Hague he received the complaints of Coburg; the Dutch Government itself addressed him in the same tone, and all implored him to use his influence in favour of protecting the Rhine frontier. He was obliged to confess to himself that though his negotiations had retarded the withdrawal of Prussia from the Coalition, they had only accelerated the retreat of Möllendorf from Mayence. The possibility presented itself to his lively mind, that Pitt might concur in the views of Coburg and the Dutch; and he therefore suddenly declared to Count Haugwitz, that he would entirely break off the discussion, unless every thing was left *in statu quo* on the Rhine, until the arrival of an answer from London. [1] Haugwitz, on his side, had letters from Möllendorf, in which the latter expressed

[1] The editor of Malmesbury's papers only mentions this important point incidentally in a note. This book, though it contains much valuable matter, is on the whole one-sided and incomplete; many despatches have been omitted or curtailed without recognisable reason, and the opinions are throughout extremely prejudiced. In the case before us, the circumstance that Malmesbury himself detained the Prussian

the greatest disinclination to a Belgian crusade; he therefore determined to prepare the fatal order according to Malmesbury's wish; and the march of the Prussian army was stopped. Malmesbury had soon reason enough to repent of his ebullition of feeling. No sooner had the definitive negotiation begun at the Hague, than the answer arrived from London, to the effect that England not only approved of the march of the Prussians to Belgium, but made it a condition of the subsidy. On the other hand Manstein informed Haugwitz, that the king still wished to go in person to the army, but that at present—chiefly on account of the Emperor's being in Belgium,—he preferred the Rhenish theatre of war, and would make his appearance in it with 85,000 men; while for Belgium, if England insisted upon it, he would only grant 50,000 men. What would Malmesbury have given, if he could only have annihilated his former protest against the march to Cologne! But it was now too late; Haugwitz would not hear a word about any express obligation to carry on the war in Belgium. As, however, in all other respects he showed the most ready compliance, Malmesbury determined to seek a compromise. Haugwitz promised, in consideration of a subsidy of 87,000 pounds sterling per month,[1] to raise an army of 62,400 men, which was to be ready for the field four weeks after the payment of the first instalment—probably by the 24th of May. The conquests made by this force were to be at the disposal of the Maritime Powers; while the troops were to be employed in such quarters as seemed for the interest of these Powers, according to a military compact to be concluded between the three States.

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army on the Rhine, did not suit the Editor's general opinion, that the delay of the Prussians in leaving Mayence was a piece of treachery, and he therefore slurs it over. —

[1] Malmesbury's Diary III, 91. £ 50,000 were to be paid to the troops, and £ 37,000 for food and forage.

The ultimate object, therefore, was to be in accordance with the aims of the English, but the mode of obtaining that object, and the choice of the theatre of war, were to be reserved for a future agreement between the generals. Malmesbury, on his side, from a consideration of the whole subject, regarded the choice of Belgium as certain; while the king of Prussia, on the other hand, was rejoicing in the thought that he should at last be able to go to the Rhine.[1] This real divergence of opinion, in the midst of apparent harmony, naturally brought with it serious consequences when the time for action came. But what was still worse, Manstein continued his endeavours to cool down the martial ardour of the king, and every day brought him fresh aid from the East in doing this. As early as the 6th of April he wrote to Haugwitz, that the king wished to start for the army at once, and had with great difficulty been induced to defer his departure for a week; but that he, Manstein, nevertheless considered this determination as still doubtful; the absence of the king from Berlin, he said, appeared to him extremely mischievous, more especially on account of Poland; and the Ministers, he added, agreed in this opinion. He explained his view of the position of affairs more at length, in a letter of the 10th of April; he lamented that Haugwitz had granted the 62,000 men without making it a condition that they should be employed on the Rhine; it was indeed natural, he said, and

[1] This exact account of the affair, drawn as it is from the documents on either side, indisputably proves, we think, that it is unjust to accuse Haugwitz of duplicity in this affair, when he allowed, in his conversation with the English agent, the possibility of a war in Belgium, and afterwards assured Marshal Möllendorf that the choice of the battle ground was still open. A letter of his to Malmesbury, written in June, is still extant, in which he describes the course of the negotiation in the manner stated above, and Lord Malmesbury was not able to deny its accuracy.

fair, that if the Maritime Powers furnished the money, they should determine the arena of the contest; but he could not see how the army could possibly leave the Rhine, or what was to take its place. But he added that the king must not even go to the Rhine. "The reason of this," he said, "is the Polish affair. Igelström urgently begs for our assistance; if we give it, no one but the king, and he only in Berlin, can arrange the details. But he thinks of nothing but the French war; I fear he takes the Polish matter—which by itself could have no serious consequences—too easily." In the midst of these cautious and anxious deliberations, the wary politician comforts himself with help from above. "The Lord be with you, my dear Haugwitz," he concluded, "and guide you in all your ways; and He will do this, if we are only faithful to Him, and depend upon Him with all our souls; this is all that is necessary, however dark the prospect may be."

While he was writing these words, affairs in Poland had turned out much worse than he had feared. The revolt had begun, and spread with a rapidity which surpassed all expectations.

The disbanding of the Polish soldiers was to begin in the first half of March. It took place in some regiments without difficulty; the men dispersed with complaints and threats, and most of them took the direction of Warsaw, which they succeeded in reaching, although the Russians had drawn a triple cordon round it, to keep off the unwelcome guests. But when the order reached Brigadier Madalinski, who lay in garrison at Pultusk with ten squadrons of cavalry, he openly refused obedience, collected his troops, and threw himself into the low swampy grounds on the Narew near Ostrolenka. The poorer nobles of the neighbourhood flocked to his standard, and increased his force to about 2,000 men. The excitement caused throughout the country by this step, and especially in Warsaw, was immense; the discharge of soldiers suddenly came everywhere to a stand-

still; the Warsaw regiments dismissed sixteen men, and then declared to General Igelström that they had fulfilled the order. The latter received, at the same time, the first trustworthy accounts from Lithuania of the numbers and plans of Kosciusko's associations. He saw himself all at once exposed to a danger which threatened the whole kingdom, and was as completely without presence of mind in this dilemma, as he had been haughty and obstinate in prosperity. To the great encouragement of the Poles, he first of all had his furniture packed, and sent his mistress off to Russia. He kept the Russian garrison in Warsaw under arms day and night, wearied his troops, and formed a new plan every day for crushing the revolt. After long indecision two small columns were sent out against Madalinski, but these were no longer able to overtake the bold cavalry chief, who had first turned eastwards against the new Prussian province, dispersed the small posts of hussars on the frontier, and plundered the public money chests in some of the districts; then, taking a sudden turn towards the south, he crossed the Vistula, marched past Warsaw, and made with all speed towards the districts of Cracow. Igelström, utterly bewildered, sought help in every quarter, but could not make up his mind to follow anybody's advice. Pistor, his quartermaster-general, an able and energetic officer, called upon him to disarm the Polish regiments in Warsaw; but he sighed and said that that would cost a horrible amount of bloodshed, and make the revolt general. The Prussian ambassador, Buchholz, called his attention to the importance of the arsenal at Warsaw, the only large depôt of arms in all Poland, and begged him at any cost to occupy the building with Russian troops; but he only answered by an urgent request that Prussia would interfere, and occupy the whole country as far as the Vistula, including Cracow and Warsaw. On the intelligence of Madalinski's marches, his first idea was to leave Warsaw, where he was in the greatest danger between the Polish garrison and the

excited citizens, and to hasten after the Polish general with all his forces. He was detained, however, by the increasing ferment in the capital, where the inns were crowded with needy noblemen, discharged soldiers, and adventurers of every sort, and where the 25th of March was openly talked of as the day for the general rising. From the country districts, however, intelligence arrived that the great landowners had shown themselves very lukewarm during Madalinski's passage, and had made their cooperation dependent on the aid of some foreign Power. Meanwhile the 25th passed over in Warsaw without disturbance, and Igelström thereupon sent off Generals Denissow and Tormassow with 7,000 men against Madalinski, stationed three battalions and ten squadrons some miles south of Warsaw, and destined the main body of his forces, about 8,000 men, to keep the city itself in check.

It was just at this moment that the military revolt at Cracow avowed its real character, and proclaimed itself as a national Revolution. On the intelligence of Madalinski's exploit, Kosciusko hastened from Dresden; on the 23rd, a Polish battalion drove the few Russian companies which were still quartered in Cracow out of the city; a few hours afterwards Kosciusko himself arrived, and immediately took the lead of the movement. On the 24th the troops and inhabitants took the oath of unconditional obedience to him. In an earnest and solemn manifesto he pourtrayed the disgraceful subjugation of the country by the Russians and Prussians, proclaimed the determination of the country to conquer, or to die for freedom, and decreed the suspension of all the authorities which had hitherto submitted to the enemies of the nation. He said that until the country should be set free, he should assume the dictatorship, and that the government at home would be carried on by a National Council to be appointed by himself. He then, with restless activity, arranged the administration of Cracow, appointed new officials, endeavoured to procure money and

provisions, and sent a summons to all the men in the neighbourhood capable of bearing arms. Six days afterwards he left the city on hearing that Madalinski, hard pressed by the Russians, was approaching by forced marches. He went to meet him with a reinforcement of more than 2,000 men, collected on his march a few hundred peasants armed with scythes, and having effected a junction with Madalinski first came upon the vanguard of the enemy on the 4th, not far from Raclawicze.

This was General Tormassow with about 4,000 men—a force nearly equal to that of the Poles in numbers, and far superior in artillery. Fortunately for the Poles he had separated some days before from Demissow, whom, as a mere general of Cossacks, he did not choose to obey; and now again, from jealousy of his colleague, he proceeded to make a hasty attack, in order to reap the glory of conquering the rebels for himself alone. He divided his force into three columns, which, separated by woody ravines and hills, advanced singly against the Poles without communications or reserves. At the very beginning of the battle Kosciusko defeated the centre column by a bold bayonet charge, during which the scythe-men rushed upon the Russian batteries, and cut down the gunners at their guns. The enemy's wings were thus separated from one another; the right wing, however, repulsed an attack of the mounted nobles, and Kosciusko's personal efforts were necessary at this point to decide the victory; whereupon the last column left the field without further resistance. The Russians lost about 400 killed, 800 missing, and 12 guns; yet the victors, in spite of their small losses, were in such a state of confusion and dissolution, that Kosciusko retreated during the night in the direction of Cracow. The flying cavalry had filled the country as far as Cracow with the report of the defeat of the Poles; and Kosciusko was so enraged at their cowardice, that he changed his nobleman's dress for a peasant's frock,

and swore to wear the latter until the nobility had wiped out this shameful stain.

The news of this engagement fell like a thunderbolt upon Igelström. It was not possible to keep it secret in Warsaw; it passed from mouth to mouth with the rapidity of lightning, and became the watchword in every quarter for the decisive catastrophe. The position of the Russian general was all the more critical because Tormassow after his defeat had made a lateral movement, and left the road to Warsaw open to the victorious Poles. Tormassow begged for reinforcements with piteous complaints, and Igelström sent him the division which was stationed at Lublin, after which he himself had simply no means at all of isolating the capital, and keeping it in check from without. Pistor hereupon entered into a negotiation with the Polish government, respecting the necessary means of keeping possession of Warsaw. The leading men, who were conscious of being more hateful to the patriots than the Russians themselves, were quite prepared to take up the contest against the Revolution, and readily acceded to the proposals of the Russian officer. But the conspiracy had stretched its ramifications even into the highest official circles, and it was in this way that the conspirators gained information of all the plans aud arrangements of the Russians. They learned that Igelström had not ventured to demand the occupation of the arsenal by Russian troops, nor the disarming of the Polish regiments.[1] They hastened all the more to complete the works in the arsenal, and to distribute the store of arms to the troops and citizens. They determined at all hazards to take advantage of the favourable moment, and to begin the

[1] It was only an artifice to excite the citizens, when the shoemaker Kilinski afterwards (on the 11th) spread the report that the Russians were going to occupy the arsenal, disguised in Polish uniforms. His neighbour the tailor, he said, who was employed to make the uniforms, had given him the information.

contest as quickly as possible. The troops were worked upon by the generals Ozarowski and Mokranowski, and the artisans by a shoemaker named Kilinski; and at the same time the word was passed to Grodno to begin the revolt in Lithuania also, on the same day as in Warsaw—the 17th of April. To all appearance the capital was quieter than ever; but in secret the heads of the conspiracy were actively at work, and on the 15th distributed 50,000 cartridges to the population in one day. Meanwhile Igelström repeatedly urged the Prussian general Schwerin to send him help; but the Government at Berlin was unwilling to believe in the extent of the danger, and the king, especially, all whose thoughts were turned to the French war, did not choose to fritter away his strength. He therefore decidedly rejected the demand of Igelström that he should occupy all the Polish country as far as the Vistula, from Cracow to Warsaw; he was unwilling, he said, to meddle with Cracow, if it were only on account of the excitable jealousy of Austria. The violation of South Prussia by Madalinski's march only excited in him the thought of incorporating the border town of Zakrozyn, in the neighbourhood of Warsaw, which he had been prevented by Sievers from obtaining at the last partition. General Wolky, therefore, was directed to occupy the place with some squadrons of cavalry and two battalions of infantry, and then to place himself at the disposal of the Russian commander, in case of need. But he was far too weak to afford any effectual aid, and the appearance of his orderlies in Warsaw only served to raise the exasperation of the Poles to the highest pitch. With ever-increasing despair Igelström saw himself entirely left to his own resources, which he regarded as utterly inadequate.

For the moment, however, this depression of the Russian general was his most dangerous enemy. The country had not yet risen *en masse*, the victory of Raclawicze had only brought Kosciusko a few bands from Lublin and Chelm,

and the rest of the provinces waited for the example of the capital. In Warsaw the patriotic party could reckon for the present on the Polish troops alone—four battalions of infantry, ten companies of artillery and pioneers, and nine squadrons of cavalry—in all scarcely four thousand men; a force which could only become formidable when backed by a rising of the population, since Igelström had more than double the number of Russian troops—namely, nine battalions of infantry and eight squadrons of cavalry.[1] But he himself, and most of his officers by his example, were thoroughly paralysed by exaggerated ideas of their own danger. "I never saw people," wrote Buchholz, "in such a terrible fright." All that the cool-blooded and intrepid Pistor proposed to Igelström seemed to him equally dangerous and unfeasible; he could not even be brought to remove his head-quarters from the palace of the Russian Embassy,—which was situated amidst narrow and many-cornered lanes—into a more open part of the city. He remained, as if chained to the spot by some demoniacal influence, in torpid inactivity; and it was only with the greatest trouble that he could at last be brought to agree to some definite plan of defence. In drawing it up Pistor had an eye chiefly to the security of the head-quarters, and the isolation of the Polish regiments. As the barracks of the latter were situated at opposite ends of the city, the Russian battalions were pushed forward to each of these extremities, with directions to prevent the entrance of Polish troops into the interior of the city; but, in case of need, to retire to head-quarters, and there form a united and imposing force. The disadvantageous side of this plan was, evidently, the remoteness of the occupied quarters of the city, and the distance of the several forces from each other; in case of a contest, all depended upon their success in keeping and acting together.

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[1] The disposable force was 7,943 men; Polit. Journal 1794, I, 620. — Treskow, page 41, estimates them at 8,400 men.

On the 16th of April the city was quieter than ever; the insurgents had just completed their preparations. On the morning of the 17th, about four o'clock, a troop of mounted guards burst from their barracks and attacked a Russian post in the neighbourhood of the Royal palace. The report of the firing, by which the latter endeavoured to defend themselves, was followed by several cannon shots from the arsenal as a signal for the Polish troops and the insurgent people; the "Crown guards" therefore hastened in a body to the arsenal, and several companies crossed over into the city from Praga in boats. Dzialinski's regiment, whose barracks were in the Cracow suburb, prepared at the same time to force an entrance into the old city, and in all the streets armed mobs were formed, which fell with infinite fury upon individual Russians. Several hundred soldiers, who were hastening to their divisions, orderlies and adjutants who were carrying orders from head-quarters to the advanced posts, were slain in this way in the first few hours, and often amidst cruel tortures; the communication between Igelström and most of his battalions was completely interrupted. Before long a swarm of some hundred workmen and soldiers moved from the lanes of the old city against the Russian head-quarters, but were repulsed with much bloodshed by the one battalion and a half which was posted there. A second and third attempt had no better result, so that towards ten o'clock the people desisted from their attack, and contented themselves with blockading the palace, and keeping up a continual fire of musketry. Meanwhile the chase after single Russians continued without intermission. A portion of the mob came upon two companies which happened on this day to be going to take the sacrament, —and had on that account assembled unarmed in the early morning for divine worship—and cut them down to a man without mercy. The struggle raged equally fiercely in the Cracow suburb with the regiment Dzialinski. Two Russian battalions, supported by some cavalry, separated

into several divisions and occupied the entrances of the different streets. They had received orders not to allow the Poles to pass, but not to commence hostilities; and the leaders of the divisions, who were addressed as friends by the Poles, and called upon in the name of the king, who was allied with Russia, to give them a passage, were a prey to the most cruel uncertainty. An attempt to get new orders from Igelström failed; Dzialinski thereupon attacked one of the Russian posts with his whole force; and as the other divisions in their stupefaction and bewilderment adhered to the letter of their orders, and remained immovable each at its own post, the Russians were speedily overwhelmed, nearly two companies cut to pieces, and their line of defence bloodily broken through. About this time the firing at head-quarters had already subsided; the Russian officers at a distance thought that they had been overpowered and that all was lost; they therefore marched the divisions in the southern quarter of the city, not back to Igelström, according to their orders, but to the nearest gate. They hoped in this way to escape destruction themselves, and at the same time to save the great park of artillery, which had been stationed in a neighbouring village. The remains of five battalions—more than half the Russian force—gradually assembled at this spot, and held a confused consultation as to what was to be done next. Their leader, General Nowitzki, saw nothing but danger and disaster in every direction, and thought that there was no choice but between disgrace and ruin. Several hours passed in inactive despair; then a surgeon arrived from head-quarters, who had stolen through the Polish mobs, and brought new orders from Igelström to join him at all hazards. Soon after noon, therefore, they once more prepared for an attack on the rebellious citizens. Nowitzki told off about two-thirds of his men for this undertaking under Colonel Klugen, who then moved forward in a long column, and at first passed without resistance through the more thinly inhabited

streets of the suburbs. Gradually, however, as they approached the interior of the city a hostile fire was commenced; it came from a troop of perhaps sixty Poles, who with a single gun boldly threw themselves in the way of the enemy's force, and received the head of the Russian column with grape shot. Colonel Klugen immediately halted; his soldiers murmured, refused to advance, or even to fire on the Poles. The despairing officer stood for three hours in this way, hearing the thunder of the cannon from head-quarters, and unable to advance a step. Towards evening he returned to Nowitzki, and they both marched, helpless and bewildered, into the falling darkness, with the sole idea of seeking deliverance from the nearest Prussian or Russian division. The fate of Warsaw was thus decided. Towards evening the remnants of some of the battalions stationed in the northern parts of the city collected round Igelström; but they had all suffered cruelly, the soldiers were in a great measure desperate or stupified, and many of them could not be prevented from plundering the neighbouring houses, where, in their intoxication and isolation, they soon fell helpless into the hands of the Poles. Fortunately for the Russian general things looked no better on the enemy's side; Mokranowski, who had assumed the chief command, was unable towards evening to collect any considerable force for a decisive attack. The night, therefore, passed in tolerable quiet, and on the 18th, Igelström, roused from his long vacillation by Pistor, forced his way with about 700 men through the Polish street-combatants, hard pressed and several times in the greatest danger, until he reached the gate, where he was received by the Prussians under General Wolky. Warsaw was in the possession of the revolutionists after a two days' contest, in which, as was afterwards learnt, scarcely 2,500 Poles had taken an active part,[1]

[1] Pistor proves this in a very exact account of the affair. The loss of the Poles amounted to 209 killed and 147 wounded.

but which, through the feebleness of their commander, and their own want of courage and discipline, had cost the Russians nearly two-thirds of their army,[1] eleven guns, and the reputation of military superiority.

The din of war and anarchy was heard throughout the city during the whole day, even after the departure of Igelström. Small Russian detachments, sentinels who had been forgotten or cut off, stragglers and plunderers, were dispersed by the mobs, and generally cut to pieces. Parties of soldiers who had been taken prisoners were dragged from one building to another, and in their passage through the streets too often became the victims of the people's unbridled hatred. It was with difficulty that the revolutionary leaders protected the members of the Russian embassy; and they vainly strove to save the houses of the Polish magnates of the Russian party from plunder and destruction. Several members of the last Diet—Ankwitz, Bishop Kossakowsky, the Hetmann Ozarowski and General Zabiello—were arrested by the raging populace, and a Revolutionary Tribunal was appointed to enquire into their acts of treachery. For the time, indeed, the armed workmen and vagabonds had completely the upper hand. Mokranowsky was confirmed by acclamation in the post of Commander-in-chief, and Zakrzewski was placed at the head of the civil administration; in the other departments the government was carried on by a Provisional Committee, in which Kapustas and Kilinski played the chief part in a sufficiently noisy manner. The patriotic ardour of the richer citizens was thoroughly cooled on the very first day by these excesses; they saw their property in immediate danger from a lawless mob, and trembled at the revenge of the great Powers which threatened them from a distance. King Stanislaus considered the fate

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[1] 122 men wounded, 2,265 killed, more than 2,000 prisoners. Polit. Journal, *loco citato*.

of Poland sealed by these acts of violence, but readily issued a declaration that he made common cause with the nation, without however inspiring confidence in any one.

Exactly similar catastrophes to that of Warsaw took place at the same time in Samogitia and Lithuania. The indefatigable conspirator Jasinski had gained over about 200 men in Wilna for the revolt—students, priests, officers, and Jews; he could moreover reckon upon two companies of Polish infantry belonging to the garrison of the city. He managed to lull the Russian general Arseniew into the most complete security, by a show of openhearted frankness; so that the latter, after receiving many warnings, called him to account at a ball, and asked him whether it was possible that he was engaged in a plot. Jasinski replied with immovable cheerfulness, that nothing in the world was impossible; and when the General, entering into the joke, went on to ask him how he intended to overpower himself and his 2,000 Russians, Jasinski rejoined with perfect *sangfroid*, to the great terror of his accomplices, who were hanging breathlessly on his words: "Well," he said, "I shall surprise and arrest you late in the evening in your dwelling, and then easily manage the soldiers, scattered as they are through the town, when deprived of their leader." The general laughed, and was quite convinced of Jasinski's innocence. But on the evening of the 23rd of April, the plan which Jasinski had laughingly revealed was carried out with complete success. First Arseniew, and then, in the course of the night, 1,500 of his men were surprised and taken prisoners, and the feeble remains of the Russian force were driven with great bloodshed out of the city. Upon this Colonel Sicianow, mistrusting his own strength, evacuated Grodno also, and the whole of Lithuania was a few days afterwards in a state of insurrection. In Wilna, too, the patriots fell with the same fury as in Warsaw upon their Russianised countrymen; General Kossakowski was arrested, and in twenty-four hours was hanged as a traitor to his country. The

news of his execution at once decided the fate of his brother and the other prisoners in Warsaw; they too suffered death at the hands of the executioner on the 9th of May, after a short and irregular trial. The more moderate patriots longed for the arrival of Kosciusko, because they expected from his high feeling of honour a speedy termination to all these scenes of horror. But matters were already in such a confused and unhinged state, that three weeks passed before the general received the slightest intelligence of the revolt in Warsaw. He was at that time making the greatest exertions to arm the peasants in the palatinates of Cracow and Sendomir; but his efforts were entirely frustrated by the apathy of the serfs, and the open disfavour of the landed proprietors, who in every peasant that fell for his country saw nothing but a loss of income. Kosciusko, therefore, was for a long time unable to renew the attack on Tormassow's Russians, until at last the troops of the line in the province of Lublin raised the standard of insurrection, drove away their Generals, who warned them of the consequences, and placed the zealous patriot Colonel Grochowski at their head.[1] Further aid arrived from the Ukraine, whence some divisions,—amounting to of 6,000 men—which had been forced into the Russian service in the preceding autumn, breaking through the surrounding garrisons, forced their way, with desperate courage to Kosciusko.[2] Henceforth the General might consider himself as the virtual master of the whole Polish territory, with the exception of that portion which was actually occupied by the remnant of the Russians, and the heads of the Prussian columns.

Such were the reports which, on and after the 26th of April, burst upon Berlin, hour after hour in uninterrupted succession, like peals of thunder, announcing a catastrophe pregnant with the most momentous consequences. It was evident that contingencies were here arising, just as im-

[1] Zajonczek 109. — [2] Treskow 61, Zajonczek 117.

portant to Europe as the consequences of the French war, and still more immediately so to Prussia. Even before the outbreak in Warsaw, Lucchesini had sent in a memorial from Vienna, on the 7th of April, which clearly delineated the change in the state of matters produced by the Polish insurrection. It was all over for a long time to come with the Russian plans of conquest in Turkey; it was all over, therefore, with Austria's hope of gaining for herself a share of Eastern booty. All the more violent, of course, would be the anger of Catharine against the authors of this disturbance: the utter annihilation of Poland was without doubt already decreed in the excited mind of the Empress. This then might console the Emperor also for the failure of his Turkish schemes. Nothing was to be looked for with greater certainty than an Austrian proposal for a third partition of Poland, which would at once hold out a prospect to the Emperor of obtaining the long-cherished object of his ardent desires, and a rich compensation for the French war. But how was Prussia affected by these changes? The conflagration in Poland threatened the Prussian State in a dangerous manner, since the rebellion would in all probability soon extend to Prussian Poland. Prussia, therefore, must arm, and must come forward all the more energetically, since she would have to maintain her influence, and perhaps her political independence, against the rivalry of both the Imperial courts. If Prussia could succeed in crushing the revolt before the appearance of the two Powers—if she were the first to occupy Cracow, and to seize this city, which was equally important to Kosciusko and to Austria, with a firm hand—then and then only could she take up a dignified and decisive attitude in the Polish question. But to effect this, one thing was indispensable—to have the free disposal of all the forces of the monarchy. It was impossible to carry on a great war at the same time on the Rhine and on the Vistula; that which had long appeared desirable—the with-

drawal of Möllendorf from the French theatre of war—had now become a necessity.

The Ministers thanked the Marquis for this precise exposition of the only system of which they approved. But the memorial had but little effect upon the king, in the first instance, because it reached him almost at the same moment as the Hague treaty, and the king had no taste for anything but the warlike glory which was opened to him there. Yet even then a few regiments in Silesia and East Prussia were placed upon a war footing, and pushed forward towards Poland. But these armaments were not carried on with any great earnestness, until after the insurrections in Warsaw and Wilna, when the whole of Poland seemed to be in flames, and, consequently, the eastern frontier of Prussia seriously threatened in its whole extent. Orders were sent in great haste to mobilise 64 battalions of infantry and 8,500 cavalry—in all nearly 50,000 men—with which General Favrat was in the first place to cover and support the remnants of the Russian army, amounting to about 12,000 men. Hereupon Manstein ventured to hint—at first very gently, but soon more and more emphatically—of what great importance the new theatre of war was to Prussia; how uselessly she was sacrificing herself in the French contest for England and Austria; how important it was to her to protect herself in Poland, as much against Austria as against Kosciusko; and how, consequently, the whole position of affairs demanded the personal presence of the King, not on the Rhine, but on the Vistula. When he had got so far, however, he was interrupted by the decided impatience of the king, who was resolutely determined to have his tilt with the Jacobins; the only thing which Manstein could obtain was an accelerated order to Favrat to cross the Polish frontier as soon as possible, and to commence the contest against the rebels. Meanwhile Kosciusko tried to negotiate with Prussia through the ambassador Buchholz, who was detained in Warsaw. He sent him word that he had with the greatest

reluctance adopted hostile measures against Prussia; that he was ready to make peace, and even to guarantee the present Prussian boundary, if Prussia would no longer grant a refuge to the Russian troops. He even promised to leave the Russians in possession of the territory acquired in the preceding war, if they made no further attempt to interfere with the internal independence of the remaining Republican territory. The king, indeed, decidedly refused all one-sided negotiations with Poland, and directed Buchholz to answer all overtures of this kind by demanding his passport; but Kosciusko's offer made a deep impression upon him, inasmuch as it afforded the possibility of quickly settling the Polish difficulty, and then proceeding with the long-desired campaign on the Rhine. But Manstein considered that the critical moment had now arrived. After secretly assuring himself of the support of Geusau and the Foreign Minister, he declared to the king on the 5th of May, with all submission, but with the greatest decision, that before the termination of the Polish contest His Majesty must not go to the Rhine. The king unconcernedly replied that he could not understand that; that he felt sure that the matter might be arranged by negotiations in which he was by no means wanted. But Manstein had considered his subject in all its bearings, and had a ready answer to every objection, Hitherto, he cried, there could be no talk of commencing serious negotiations, since every day brought news of fresh hostilities on the part of the Poles. Hesitation, he said, was no longer possible, but, on the contrary, incessant and energetic action was absolutely necessary; the king must leave Berlin on the 12th, reach the army on the 14th, commence operations on the 15th, take Cracow and Warsaw, drive the enemy over the Vistula, and then, if it must be so, commence negotiations. "Or are we," he said at the conclusion of his passionate declamation, "to disarm in the face of such an insurrection? And if not, from what resources are we to maintain 50,000 men in the field during

the whole summer?" The king looked about in embarrassment for an evasive answer: "Can we," said he, at last, "reckon on the support of the Russians in such an operation?" "I should think," said Manstein, "that they will not allow the affront offered to them to go unavenged, nor leave us alone to do what we like in Poland. In short," he continued with increased warmth, "everything urges us to assume the offensive on the Vistula, and there alone. As soon as the struggle begins in that quarter, we must signify to Austria that we are ourselves in the case of needing an auxiliary corps of 20,000 men, according to the terms of our alliance; and if Austria, as no doubt she will, refuses to send us aid, we will recall that number from our own Rhine army, and can then quietly await the issue." Here, however, the king flew out, saying that in this way the French war would never be brought to an end, and that he wished to hear no more of such proposals. Manstein remained unmoved. "Your majesty," said he, "must remember that after all each of our Allies is only playing his own game. Your Majesty alone keeps the common interest in view, and desires to go honestly to work; but since all the others are selfish, Prussia will be a great sufferer if she does not likewise look exclusively to her own advantage." This theme was as inexhaustible as the list of complaints against the policy of Austria; the king defended himself for a while, but at the end of the conference yielded to the arguments of his adjutant. With a sigh he agreed to fix the 12th of May as the day of his departure to Poland, and allowed instructions to be sent to Möllendorf to make his arrangements for the possibility of the recall of 25,000 men from the Rhine.

The all-important step was hereby taken: the King had acceded to the principle that the main interests of his State lay in the Polish, and not in the French, war. To this Manstein held him fast, in spite of all his attempts to recur to the darling wish of his heart. At one time the king said that he had received certain intelligence that the Rus-

sians were withdrawing entirely from Poland; at another, that South Prussia would revolt as soon as the troops marched off to Poland; "We must, therefore," said the king, "beware of incautiously assuming the offensive." It was not very difficult for Manstein to meet such objections as these; for official intelligence had been received of the approach of Russian reinforcements; and as to the ferment in South Prussia there was, of course, no more effectual method of stopping it than a splendid victory over Kosciusko. The question of the recall of the Rhenish troops presented greater difficulties; Manstein had the support of the Minister at War, indeed, but he was decidedly opposed by Möllendorf and Haugwitz, who energetically protested against such an open breach of the lately concluded Hague Treaty. The king sided with them entirely, so that Manstein bitterly complained that none pulled at the same rope with him, and proposed, in order to gain a supporter of his own views, that Lucchesini should be recalled from Vienna to the King's head-quarters in Poland. The king replied, to his great astonishment, that it was still quite uncertain whether and when he should be able to start for Poland. In his longing for the Rhine he had actually discovered a not entirely groundless objection to the Polish expedition, and made the utmost use of it. Immediately after the beginning of the insurrection, Count Golz had received orders in St. Petersburg to sound the views of Catharine respecting Poland; and after the entrance of Wolky into that country, he was especially to enquire about Zakrozyn, and the compensation destined for Prussia corresponding to her increased armaments. Golz reported that the catatrophe at Warsaw had produced a terrible effect upon the whole of Russia, that one cry for revenge and annihilation resounded through that mighty empire, and that Catharine, scarcely able to maintain her composure,' had ordered the speediest preparations to be made. But with respect to her other plans, he said that he had learnt nothing. She declared herself

very grateful for the zeal of Prussia, but did not seem to trust entirely to its continuance. She eagerly agreed to the proposal of the king to rouse Austria from her neutrality towards Poland, and to induce her openly to take part against Kosciusko. But with regard to the future fate destined for Poland, he had been able to gain no information. "Zakrozyn," said Ostermann, "is a subject of common interest, we will speak of that hereafter." "We must not dispose," he said at another time, "of the bear's hide, before the animal is killed." The king made this reticence of the Russians the pretext for declaring to general Manstein, on the 9th May, that he must after all postpone his departure, until he received some clearer intelligence from St. Petersburg. Another long contest then began, which, however, ended like the former one in the complete defeat of the King's wishes. "Heaven be praised!" wrote Manstein to Möllendorf; "everything is once more in good train." On the 14th the king left Berlin to take the command of his Polish army; Manstein was with him, and Lucchesini hastened from Vienna to meet him. It was decided that Prussia should do nothing more in the French war than what was absolutely unavoidable.

Let us now transplant ourselves to the great Western theatre of war, the blood-soaked soil of which only too quickly brought to maturity the seed which had been scattered by the insurgent Poles.

CHAPTER IV.

STRUGGLE FOR BELGIUM.

CONTINUATION OF THE WAR IN LA VENDÉE.—CONTESTS IN ITALY.—THE ENGLISH TAKE CORSICA.—MASSENA OCCUPIES SAORGIO.—ARRIVAL OF THE EMPEROR FRANCIS IN BELGIUM.—SIEGE OF LANDRECY.—FRUITLESS ATTEMPTS TO RELIEVE IT.—LANDRECY CAPITULATES.—THUGUT PREVENTS FURTHER OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.—VAIN ATTEMPTS OF THE FRENCH ON THE SAMBRE.—PICHEGRU GAINS A VICTORY IN FLANDERS, NEAR MOUSCRON.—COBURG RESOLVES TO GO TO FLANDERS.—NEGOTIATION OF MONTGAILLARD.—BATTLE OF TOURCOIN.—ENGAGEMENT AT TOURNAI.

WHILE Eastern Europe was stirred to its very depths by the plans of Russia and the explosion in Poland, the French war had already begun on the Ocean and the Mediterranean; at first with many disasters to the Republicans, for which they had chiefly themselves to blame.

We may remember the comprehensive plans of the Committee of Public Safety. On the one side the long-prepared insurrections in Naples, Genoa and Turin, were to pave the way for the armies of Dumerbion and Dumas over the Alps and Apennines, and put them in possession of Italy. On the other, the French rulers hoped, after trampling out the last sparks of war in La Vendée, to be able to send the Army of the West against the coasts of England in the beginning of spring, and to crush the most obstinate adversaries of the Republic beneath the walls of London. When these terrific blows had once been dealt, there seemed no doubt at all that Austria, isolated on every side, would be easily overpowered; and then there would be no limit in

the whole of Europe to the arms of the Republic, but the will of its Rulers. The French government, therefore, zealously urged the commanders of the Army of the West to commence operations even in the middle of winter. Rossignol had been succeeded by general Turreau, who had hitherto served in the Moselle Army—that is, an officer was substituted for a Parisian demagogue; but unfortunately an officer who was proud to call himself the friend of Rossignol, and who intended to finish the civil war in accordance with the views of the Hebertists. It was in the middle of January when he undertook the command; at the time, therefore, in which Robespierre had once more quarrelled with the Dantonists, and the Committee was again driven into the paths of terrorism by Collot and St. Just. The Government, consequently, agreed entirely with the general in his views respecting La Vendée; it was determined that the decree of the 25th of August should now attain its long-desired accomplishment, and La Vendée, in the literal sense of the words, be utterly annihilated. The burning of all inhabited places, the devastation of every field, the cutting down of every wood, the removal of the few Republicans from the land, the slaughter of all hostile or neutral inhabitants, of whatever age or sex—these were the horribly simple outlines of Turreau's system of war.[1] He thought that after having annihilated the great "Royal Catholic army," he should be able to begin the work of devastation at once, since only about three considerable leaders still kept the field, with small forces, in the interior of the revolted province; while, on the coast, the somewhat stronger Charette was sufficiently occupied by General Haxo at Nantes. In consequence of this weakness of his opponents, he did not scruple to scatter his own forces over the whole

[1] The official papers in *Guerre des Vendéens*, Vol. III, show the falsity of Turreau's declaration in his Memoirs, that he had only been the subservient tool of others.

extent of the country, in order to carry the devastation into all its districts at once. He therefore divided his troops into twelve columns, which were to advance from different points towards the interior, and step by step reduce the country to an uninhabited wilderness. These masses of men began to move towards the end of January. Some of his officers, indeed, endeavoured to mitigate their task, which was abhorrent to themselves, by the mode of its execution; others raised their voices in warning against the political error of driving the half-wearied rebels to despair, and therefore to fresh exertions; but their orders were inexorable, and most of the instruments for carrying them out had long become callous to every form of horror. The flames of the villages soon began to rise on every side; the inhabitants were slain as in a great *battue*, the women dishonoured and then murdered, children and infants put to death, amidst rude laughter, by tortures of various kinds. At first the Republican army made considerable progress, and obtained some military successes. The gallant La Roche-Jacquelin fell in the course of February; Chollet, which in the preceding autumn had become a scene of terrible remembrance for the Royalists, was once more occupied, and a broad girdle of the country was transformed into a smoking desert. But retribution for these atrocious deeds was close at hand. The peasants, who since September had almost lost all hope, and were ready to submit on condition that their lives were spared, once more banded themselves together in savage revolt, at the aspect of this pitiless butchery. The old leaders Stofflet and Marigny, who had hitherto seen nothing but timidity and exhaustion among their soldiers, suddenly found themselves surrounded by thousands and thousands of men thirsting for vengeance; and even in February they struck several of the "hellish columns" (as their enemies called themselves) with crushing blows. Turreau now saw the whole extent of the land roused to fresh resistance, and with shame and wrath had to announce to

his Government, that he should need considerable reinforcements, even to maintain himself on the edge of the insurgent province. When the season for great operations arrived, therefore, the employment of the Western Army in the expedition against England had to be indefinitely postponed.

The prospects of the French in the southern part of the wide theatre of war—in Italy and on the Mediterranean—were not much more favourable. The domestic feuds had occasioned bitter losses in February, by enabling the English to make themselves masters of the island of Corsica. The progress of the Revolution produced the same effects in that country as in Lyons and Toulon. At first the liberal enthusiasm had occupied all minds, almost without distinction of parties: then a Radical faction had arisen, which was soon divided into a Girondist and a Jacobin section. After the victory of the Jacobins in Paris, the adherents of the Gironde had strengthened themselves in Corsica, as in the other Departments, by the adhesion of all moderate men; and under the conduct of their old national hero, General Paoli—formerly engaged against the Genoese—had attempted open resistance to the Committee of Public Safety. These general features, however, received a particular colour and distinctness in Corsica from the peculiar local circumstances of this island. It was not political principles alone which here came into collision; in this narrow space, two contending ages of the world, and innumerable family feuds, stood opposed to one another in arms. The French Government, which had scarcely been in possession of the island a quarter of a century, had spread the influence of modern civilisation and politics only through the towns on the coast. The mountains in the interior still maintained their antiquated, rude, and patriarchal, forms of life. Peasants, herdsmen, and hunters, lived independently—every village, nay, every family by itself—careless about the Government, and in open feud with the townsmen; protecting themselves

sword in hand against hostile neighbours, and taking quick and bloody vengeance for every insult. And thus the contention of political parties was traversed, on the one side, by the hostility between townsmen and mountaineers, and, on the other, by the hereditary feuds of contending clans. When the Jacobins in the towns got the upper hand, it was almost a matter of course that their opponents should be supported by the greater part of the mountain districts. After General Paoli had assumed the leadership of the mountaineers, it was quite certain that particular families, who were separated from him by hereditary hatred—e. g. the Arena, the Ceracchi and the Buonaparte—should join the Jacobins. But in the interior the latter were far too weak; and after a short struggle they were compelled, together with the Commissaries of the Convention, and the weak garrisons, to throw themselves into the strong places on the coasts, where they were immediately blockaded by the insurgents on the land side, and by the English fleet by sea. In this difficult position they manfully maintained themselves until February 1794, when an English corps landed, and brought the insurgents a plentiful supply of all the resources of regular warfare. Within a few months afterwards the towns were compelled to capitulate, and the whole island was occupied by the English.

This, though not a dangerous, was at any rate a vexatious, loss to France, and a serious blow to her maritime position and political influence in the Mediterranean. It is true that the littoral States looked with no favour on the settlement of the English in Corsica; on the contrary, the greatest jealousy was manifested on every side. The former Spanish minister, Aranda, actually proposed peace and alliance with France in the Council of State at Madrid, in order that Spain might not be crushed by the naval power of England. The Queen, indeed, thereupon banished him to a provincial town,[1] but

[1] Report of the Dutch ambassador Van der Goes.

his views prevailed in official circles, and the Spanish ambassador at Vienna openly declared, that the naval power of Spain urgently needed an alliance with France, whether as a Monarchy or a Republic. But for the moment these views had no practical consequences, since the capture of Corsica had greatly increased the fear, as well as the dislike, of England. Under the influence of this event, Naples promised 8,000 men for garrisons in Corsica, and 12,000 men as a reinforcement of the Allied army in Lombardy. The Grand-duke of Tuscany was induced to give his all-powerful favourite, Manfredini, an adherent of France, a long leave of absence, which he was directed to spend beyond the frontier. In Genoa the democratic party had just begun their revolt by a proposal to revise the constitution; but the Senate now felt itself strong enough to frustrate all the efforts of its opponents, to hold firmly to the principle of neutrality, and to check the machinations of the French *chargé d'affaires*. And thus the only hope that remained to the French in Italy was the conspiracy in Turin, and even this required that the French army should be victorious, and approach near to the Piedmontese capital, before the latter could unfold the banner of Revolution. It was, therefore, almost a welcome event to the French, when, towards the end of March, the Neapolitan police got upon the tracks of the democrats in that city, and prevented the outbreak of their plot by numerous arrests. For the terror inspired by the discovery in this feeble Court was so great, that the King would not allow a single soldier to leave the country; and thus the Allied army in Upper Italy was disappointed of considerable and ardently desired reinforcements. The state of public feeling in Turin then became very depressed. Austria, after all the vacillation and disputes of her Ministers, had really not more than 28,000 men in Lombardy, though the nominal force was 32,000; the Sardinian army amounted to 25,000, but was completely demoralised by the disasters of the preceding year, the utter want of funds, and the

continual bickerings with Austria, and was therefore prepared for the most unfavourable issue, even before the commencement of the campaign.

Such was the state of affairs when Dumerbion, in the beginning of April, prepared to attack the position of the Allies in the Ligurian mountains.[1] He was himself advanced in years and afflicted by the gout, and generally gave his orders from his bed; but he was supported by two clever adjutants, and had some excellent generals—especially the strong and fiery Massena,—on his staff; and in authority over him were three Conventional commissioners, Salicetti, Ricord and the younger Robespierre, who at every step consulted Bonaparte, now Brigadier-general. The first task was to proceed northward from the narrow shores of the county of Nice, ascend the crest of the Apennines, seize the nearest pass (the Col di Tenda), and thence rush down through Southern Piedmont upon Turin; while at the same time General Dumas, with the Army of the Alps, was making a corresponding attack on the Maritime Alps and M. Cenis, from Savoy on the west. In order to protect the Col di Tenda the Allies had taken up a strong position at Saorgio, a few leagues distant from the pass, which General Bonaparte considered it dangerous to attack in front. There was a simple means of evading it, by moving some miles along the coast to the east, as far as Oneglia; Saorgio might then be taken in the rear, and attacked on all sides at once. There was but one obstacle in the way; the coast in question was Genoese territory, and therefore neutral, and closed to the French armies. But such a legal barrier was not of a nature to stop the Committee of Public Safety, when it was a question of a palpable advantage, possibly fraught with important consequences. As early as February the Commissioners sanctioned the proposal to occupy Oneglia; and on the 4th Bonaparte led a strong column to that place,

[1] From the official papers in Vol. I. of Massena's *Memoires*.

took it after a short resistance, and gave it up to plunder, while Massena occupied the main body of the Piedmontese by an otherwise fruitless attack upon Saorgio. The strip of coast was then occupied by the French as far as Finale, the southern declivity of the Apennines as far as Ormea cleared of the enemy, and Saorgio attacked on the 27th, from east and west, with such vigour, that General Colli, with great loss and still greater discouragement, evacuated all the hill redoubts, and withdrew his troops to the heights of the Col di Tenda. It was in vain that he sent thence to the Imperial general, de Vins, who commanded the auxiliary corps of Austrians in Piedmont, to beg for aid; and equally fruitless were the prayers of the latter to the Archduke Ferdinand for reinforcements. There was an utter want of zeal, unity, and energy in this demoralised camp; and de Vins had at last no other consolation than the thought that "the wretched mountain ravines" were of no consequence, and that he would engage the enemy in the plains if he dared to come down. On the 10th of May, therefore, the French succeeded by a well-planned flank movement in storming the pass, and thereby fixing themselves in a strong position on the crest of the mountain range, in readiness for further offensive movements. They now only waited for the appearance of General Dumas on the heights of Mt. Cenis, to give the Turinese conspirators the eagerly expected signal, and by one mighty explosion to shatter the Kingdom of Sardinia.

The French government would gladly have waited for the more complete development of affairs in this quarter, before commencing the campaign against the Austrians in Belgium. But in the midst of their unremitting and intense exertions in all directions, they had the vexation of seeing their opponents get the start of them in assuming the offensive. Carnot allowed himself no rest; the greatest activity prevailed in all the camps in drilling and training troops for the field; but many things were still in a very incomplete

state on the French side, when the Emperor Francis, on the 9th of April—accompanied by his brothers Charles and Joseph, his ministers Thugut and Trautmannsdorf, and his adjutants Rollin and Waldeck—arrived in Brussels, assumed the command of the allied army, and gave orders to commence hostilities. Whilst the Belgian capital once more resounded with the usual manifestations of joy, and loyal addresses, deputations and banquets, rapidly succeeded each other, the troops were drawn nearer together, for the purpose of arranging them for the commencement of operations. Count Clerfait, with 28,000 men, in Flanders, formed the right wing, having two small corps of communication amounting to 10,000 men stretching towards the centre near Orchies and Denain. The main army under Coburg, York and Orange, 67,000 strong, extended from Valenciennes to Bavay. Here the Emperor also fixed his head-quarters, in order to direct the intended attack on Landrecy in person. And lastly, Kaunitz, with 27,000 men, on the left wing, watched the course of the Sambre, having pushed forward another corps of 8,000 men under General Beaulieu to cover Luxemburg. They were all for the moment in the highest spirits. Count Mercy held out a prospect of large grants of money, by which the Belgian Estates were to manifest their gratitude for the royal visit. On the 11th, the Emperor announced to the Maritime Powers, that he would give up to the Dutch the provinces they had so often demanded, as soon as he should have wrested from the French the conquests made by Louis XIV., and recovered for Belgium the frontiers of 1658.[1] On the 14th, the Emperor arrived in Coburg's head-quarters, where he was delighted, two days afterwards, by a grand parade of the whole centre. It was glorious summer weather; the troops made their most splendid appearance, and the soldiers were full of joy at the thought of leaving their close and wearisome winter-

[1] Correspondence of the English ambassador, Sir Morton Eden.

quarters, and marching in good earnest against the enemy. The Emperor inhaled with delight the enlivening atmosphere of war, and for once in his life he seemed raised above himself and all the doubts which usually preyed upon him. The suspicious cares of his wonted existence were forgotten, and for the moment he had no other thought than that of leading his magnificent troops as quickly as possible to victory and renown. On the 17th the army was divided into eight columns, which extended like rays from Cateau as their centre, and therefore separated farther and farther from one another as they advanced; one portion moving to the left against the neighbouring fortress of Landrecy, and the other to the west, to clear the surrounding country, as far as Cambray, of the enemy.

This was an unwise dispersion of forces, which, with a different enemy, might have proved fatal. But in accordance with Carnot's grand plan of throwing his strongest force against the enemy's flanks, the French had not more than four divisions in the centre—a force not indeed much weaker than that of the Austrians, but which was also broken up into small bodies, forming a loose and incompact belt from Avesnes to Cambray. They were completely surprised by the attack of the Allies; their outposts retreated at all points after a short engagement; and the only column, that of the Duke of York, which met with any resistance, drove the enemy back by a furious charge as far as Guise. An energetic pursuit, in full force, might have led to the most important results; it was in the power of the Allies to disperse the enemy's centre and then seriously to threaten his isolated right wing on the river Sambre. But neither the Emperor's nor Coburg's views extended so far; they confined themselves to the more modest task of storming Landrecy. The victorious columns halted in the evening, or retraced their steps; and, on the 18th, were distributed in such a manner, that the Prince of Orange undertook to surround the place, while the other troops formed the covering

force, which extended in a large arc to the right and left of the Sambre, to a distance of about twenty-three English miles.

Untaught, therefore, by the experience of the preceeding autumn, they proceeded according to the same system which had borne the bitter fruits of Hondschotten and Wattignies. Absence of a definite object—dispersion of forces—sieges of strong places before thoroughly defeating the armies preparing to come to their relief—these were the main features of the last year's operations, and were now to be the characteristics of the approaching campaign. The consequences soon showed themselves. The French, startled but not dispirited, soon returned to the charge. At first, indeed, they were too weak to make any serious attempt; on the 21st the young soldiers of Goguet's division ran away in the greatest disorder after a short skirmish;[1] on the 22nd the divisions of Balland and Fromentin were repulsed with equal vigour; and on the 24th a column, which advanced from Cambray, was met by Esterhazy's hussars, who overthrew the enemy by a brilliant charge, and inflicted on him a loss of 1,700 killed and prisoners. But the French commander-in-chief, who had hitherto been fully occupied in Flanders according to Carnot's directions, now became aware of the peril to which his centre was exposed, and sent the veteran general Ferrand with 10,000 men to the relief of Landrecy. He might have afforded far more effectual aid, and perhaps have destroyed the allied army, which had advanced so far into the interior, if he had sent, not 10,000, but 30,000 men from Flanders to Cambray, and thrown an equal force on the besiegers from the Lower Sambre. In that case the latter, occupied in the front by Ferrand, and exposed to heavy blows on the right and left, could hardly have escaped a terrible catastrophe. But whether it was that Pichegru did not consider such great

[1] Moniteur, Floréal 12.

exertions necessary, or that he was fettered by Carnot's orders, he too adhered to the system of operating at widely separated points, and not with collected forces. Instead of uniting the greater part of his troops at the point where his centre was threatened, he, just at this time, began to carry out Carnot's plan of operation on both wings—on the Sambre and in Flanders—and thus threw away the chance of ending the campaign at once. Even as it was—thanks to the mistaken measures of the Allies—General Ferrand was able to attack their covering army with superior numbers; but the vast superiority in the quality of the allied troops fully made up for their deficiency in numbers. The battle commenced on the 26th along the whole front. On the eastern bank of the Sambre, Ferrand had a long and obstinate battle with Coburg's Austrians—45,000 against less than 30,000—and seemed for a moment victorious, but was then utterly routed by a desperate charge, led by General Kinsky, and compelled to make a hasty retreat. The Duke of York, meanwhile, held the west bank of the Sambre with 17 battalions and 60 squadrons, resting on several hastily thrown-up redoubts, against which General Chapuis was advancing from Cambray with two columns, one of 26,000, and another of 4,000 men. The heads of these columns advanced under cover of the morning fog, close to the English position, and drove in York's outposts from the villages in front of the redoubts. When the fog dispersed, and allowed the duke to take a general survey of the widely extended plain, the Imperial General Otto pointed out to him that the long column of the enemy was entirely unprotected on the left side, and Prince Charles of Schwarzenberg was ordered to make an attack at this point with the Imperial cuirassiers and nine squadrons of English cavalry. The Prince hastened at a quick trot to the extreme left of the English line, and then wheeled, taking advantage of the broken ground, against the French, who were on the point of advancing, from the villages just captured, against the

English trenches. He first came upon a small detachment of cavalry, which dispersed in a moment, leaving their leader, General Chapuis himself, in the hands of the enemy; then upon a battery of horse-artillery, which fired one round, and then galloped off in utter bewilderment to the nearest battalion of French infantry. The confusion at this point was indescribable; every man discharged his piece at random, and the shattered bodies of men rolled together into a confused mass. Schwarzenberg's troopers rattled up with loud hurrahs, and in a few minutes the French column was dispersed; then the second smaller division was overtaken, and the field covered with thousands of fugitives, prisoners, dead and dying men. Not a single battalion could be kept together, and 30,000 men were dispersed, almost without resistance, by 2,400. The loss of the French on this day amounted to 7,000 men and 41 guns, and the issue of the struggle immediately decided the fate of the beleaguered town. While the din of the battle resounded on every side, the prince of Orange opened fire from his trenches; a great number of the houses were soon in flames, and the commandant, General Rouland, despairing of relief, capitulated on the 30th. The garrison of 5,000 men became prisoners of war. And thus the Allies had taken an important fortress under the very eyes of an enemy nearly double their own numbers, inflicted upon him a loss of nearly 15,000 men and 143 guns, and proved the tactical superiority of their troops to be as great as ever. The first task of the Allies had been fulfilled splendidly enough.

To a real general, who united sagacity with love of action, the way was open a second time for the most brilliant success. A rapid and vigorous advance would have sufficed to destroy entirely the French centre, the defeat of which would have ruined the position of the enemy on the Sambre, and thus laid open the whole country as far as Paris to the Allies;—always supposing that the latter were in possession of the necessary means for penetrating so far into the

interior of the enemy's country, while Pichegru's main army remained intact. The troops had no other thought, after the battle of Cateau, than rapid pursuit: they were elated by their triumph, prepared for any fatigue, and utterly undisturbed by the cares of the scientific military Staff. But unfortunately no one shared their feelings at head-quarters, except perhaps the Emperor himself, who was utterly unable to indulge them. It is true that as long as it was necessary to continue the troublesome French war, Thugut preferred conquering to being conquered, and was by no means pleased with the pusillanimous hesitation of the Prince of Coburg. But while he complained of the sluggishness of the late offensive operations, he still maintained that Coburg needed no reinforcements, if he would but make a resolute attack on the enemy. The Prince, on the other hand, persisted in declaring all offensive movements on a grand scale, without corresponding reinforcements, foolhardy and inadmissible. General Mack, therefore, met with little encouragement when he proposed a march in force into the interior of France, with the understanding that England would send the 62,000 Prussians, which had been promised to her, in four separate divisions to Belgium. The Prussian general refused, on account of the proposed dispersion of his forces, and the want of magazines; and Thugut protested still more strongly against the plan, because he did not wish, in case of victory, to find any Prussian garrisons in the longed for border provinces of France. How unfavourable his other political views were to an energetic war of aggression against France, will be shown hereafter. He wished indeed that the army should be victorious in the field of battle; but above all things that it should not withdraw too far away from the borders of the German Empire. When the Emperor urgently demanded what was to be done next, Coburg, worked at his plan of attack against the nearest fortresses Bouchain, Cambray, and Avesnes; and contented himself in other respects with sending small reinforcements to the points threatened by the

enemy, thus adapting his own measures to those of his opponents. The initiative, therefore, soon passed over entirely to the French, who at the end of April were in motion in every part of the theatre of war, and intent upon carrying out Carnot's great plan—indifferent to the loss of Landrecy—and thereby deciding the fate of Europe.

According to this plan, as we may remember, a grand attack was to be made by both wings, while the centre confined itself to the necessary defensive measures. The great mass of the Army of the North was to enter Flanders on the West; the right wing, in conjuction with the Ardennes Army, was to open an attack upon Kaunitz; and lastly, still further to the East, a division of the Moselle Army was to distract the attention of the enemy by a *coup de main* against Namur. These movements, for the sake of which we saw the French neglecting the relief of Landrecy, had begun at all points towards the end of April, at first in a manner sufficiently alarming for the Allies, although the first operations of the French had only partial success. On the east, General Jourdan sent 40,000 men of the Moselle Army against Arlon, in the country of Luxemburg, which town the Austrian General Beaulieu evacuated after a short resistance; but being reinforced by Kaunitz with 12,000 men, he returned, and drove the enemy out of the place, which they had so lately occupied, in spite of their superior numbers. The French had not much greater success against Kaunitz himself. General Charbonnier led the Ardennes Army, on the 27th, against Beaumont, where Desjardins' division, coming from Maubeuge, formed a junction with him. Kaunitz, who was far from being a match for them, retreated across the Sambre, and contented himself with guarding the fords of the river at Charleroi, Thuin, and Merbes-le-Chateau, as strongly as possible. The advance of the French immediately came to a standstill; the generals disputed with Carnot about the place where the river should be crossed—Carnot ordering them to make the passage as near the enemy's main army

as possible, and therefore far up the river, while Charbonnier—not wishing to approach the enemy so closely—wished to operate far away to the East, somewhere near Charleroi. Nearly fourteen days were passed in this manner, until Carnot reinforced the general by two more divisions of the centre,[1] and raised the number of his forces to 60,000 men. Meanwhile Coburg, too, had sent considerable reinforcements to the general under him, which enabled Kaunitz to meet the impending attack with a force of about 32,000 men. The French advanced on the 10th of May, crossing the Sambre at Thuin and Merbes-le-Chateau. The rain poured down in torrents; the ammunition waggons stuck fast in the soaked ground of the woods, which fringe the river at this point for miles, and the French were at first able to make full use of their superior numbers with the bayonet. They extended their line, hotly fighting, nearly as far as Binche, where Kaunitz at last took up a strong position with the main body of his army round the village of Rouveroy. At midday, on the 13th, Desjardins advanced against the place with five columns;[2] the contest remained undecided until the evening, when Colonel Kienmayer fell upon the left flank of the enemy with eight squadrons, dispersed them at the very first charge, and chased the fugitives in all directions as far as the Sambre. Desjardins, alarmed by this disaster, hastened to return to the right bank under cover of the night; Charbonnier was obliged to follow him, and on the 14th not a single Frenchman was to be found on the north of the river. This first attempt upon the eastern wing of the Allies had failed, with a loss of 4,000 men and 12 guns.

The affairs of their other wing in Flanders assumed, about the same time, an aspect less promising for the Coalition.[3]

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[1] Despeaux and Fromentin. After this Charbonnier had five divisions, two of the Ardennes army and three of the North army. — [2] 40,000 against 22,000 men. — [3] The best work on the contest in Flanders is

The French general in-chief, General Pichegru, had drawn together the three strong divisions Moreau, Souham and Michaud, in all about 61,000 men, between Lille and Dunkirk, while Feldzeugmeister Clerfait had a very inferior force, and his divisions were scattered throughout the whole of Flanders. The French crossed the frontier on the 21st of April, Michaud manœuvering farthest to the west against Ypres and Nieuport, and Moreau and Souham on both banks of the Lys—the former advancing on the left, and the latter on the right, of the river—intending to unite and blockade the fortress of Menin. Clerfait was at this moment at some distance, at Denain on the Scheldt, where he obtained the first intelligence of the threatened invasion by the Prince of Coburg, from the papers of General Chapuis, who was taken prisoner at Cateau; upon which he hastened as quickly as possible to relieve Menin. He first came upon a troop of Hanoverians under General Oeynhausen, who had just taken the position of Mouscron from the French after a sanguinary contest, and had thus reopened the road to Menin. At this place Clerfait collected a body of about 10,000 men from various quarters, and was only waiting for some English auxiliaries of York's division before assuming the offensive, when, on the 29th, he was suddenly attacked on his front and both flanks by more than 30,000 men of Souham's and Moreau's divisions, and entirely defeated after an obstinate resistance. He was driven as far as the Scheldt, near Tournai, before he could rally his men under the protection of the English regiments, which had just come up. The French, who had suffered severely,

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Ditfurth's excellent book, *Die Hessen in den Niederlanden*", 1793—1795—a work which has much more matter in it than the title promises, and unites the most accurate research with the soundest judgment. Neither the French nor Austrian literature has produced anything which can be compared with it. In addition to this we have now Witzleben's *Biographie des Prinzen von Coburg*.

did not press him any further for the moment: but all prospect of saving Menin was lost by this disaster. The place itself was in a miserable condition, and utterly incapable of maintaining itself for any length of time. With the negligence which characterized the administration of Austria at this period, scarcely anything had been done, during the winter, to repair the works, and to lay up stores of ammunition and provisions. The town, therefore, must have surrendered to the very first patrol of the enemy's cavalry, had not its Commandant, the Hanoverian Hammerstein, been a man of iron character. He was an old soldier of rude courage, who in war thought of nothing but war, cared little for the confusion at head-quarters, but did what he thought best at the moment with independent energy, and succeeded in inspiring every man in the five battalions of his garrison, with soldier-like confidence. He maintained himself in the half-open place until the 29th, on which day the fire of the French blew up his powder magazine; whereupon he assembled his officers in the evening, and declared his intention of cutting his way with the garrison through the thick masses of the surrounding enemy. The bold attempt met with perfect success. Soon after midnight two columns, made up of French émigrés, Hanoverians and Hessians, broke through the Courtray and Bruges gates of the town. Immediately a wild hand-to-hand fight arose, and a horrible confusion; the enemy pressed upon them with ever increasing fury, the narrow streets were blocked up by their own artillery and that of the French, and friends and enemies rolled on, in bloody struggle, in the darkness of the night, scantily lighted by the flames of the burning houses. But Hammerstein carried off his columns, and led the 1,200 men whom he had rescued—a troop as brave as any in the world—to the standard of Clerfait.

This happened on the same day on which Landrecy capitulated. On the same evening York left Cateau for Tournai, with a corps of 10,000 men for the support of Clerfait; and

after his arrival the army amounted to 40,000 men. It was resolved, in spite of the superiority of the enemy, to assume the offensive with these forces. The boldness of this intention was not as great as might appear from the relative numbers on either side; the French began to feel the fundamental error of Carnot's great plan, which obliged their chief strength to operate without any definite object far away in Flanders. Their troops formed a long column from Lille to Courtray, projecting into the country towards the north; and according to Carnot's wishes this column was to move farther and farther towards the northwest, towards Bruges and Ostend. But Clerfait and York were stationed to the south-east of Lille, *i. e.* on the flank, nay almost in the rear, of the French army; and they could, therefore, deal a crushing blow at any point of the enemy's long line, and thereby held their numerically superior opponents in check. This was so evident, that Pichegru summoned General Bonneau with 20,000 men from Cambray to Flanders, and posted him between Lille and Tournai, as a protection for his own basis of operations against York. He had now about 30,000 men in Flanders,[1] but might have got into a difficult position, if the enemy had fallen with united forces upon Bonneau, whom they might have beaten, before Souham from Courtray, or Michaud from Ypres, could have come to his assistance. For the present, however, they spared him so fatal a blow. They resolved to attack, not Bonneau, against whom they could have employed their whole force, but Souham and Moreau. If they did not wish to give up their communications with Coburg entirely, they would be obliged to leave a considerable part of their army at Tournai, and could lead at best only half of it into battle. And thus their movements were once more crippled by the dispersion of their forces. Clerfait began his march with only 16,000

[1] Bonneau 20,000, Souham 28,700, Osten 7,000 — *presents sous les armes.* Moreau 22,2000, Michaud 12,000,

men, in order to seize the bull by the horns at a distance from his colleagues, and to attack Souham and Moreau in their front; while York remained at Tournai, with 20,000 men, in complete inactivity, Wallmoden being placed half-way between the two, for the alleged purpose of keeping up the communication between them, but really without any advantage to either. The consequence was that each party felt itself weak and liable to attack, and sent the most urgent prayers for help and reinforcements to the Imperial head-quarters. The impression was a deep one, and a number of excited and contending opinions vied for the favour of the Emperor. From a military point of view, the matter admitted of little doubt: the time had evidently come for action, and the mode of action was not to be mistaken. The grand operations of the enemy on both wings, for the purpose of surrounding the Allies, were now clearly marked out. The French position, in consequence of their late movements, now formed a great semi-circle, at the west end of which 100,000 men were advancing into Flanders, and whose eastern extremity of 60,000 men rested on the lower Sambre, while the centre was only occupied by a thin chain of posts of 18,000 men. Both flanks of the Allies therefore were more hardly pressed from day to day, and a longer delay appeared impossible even to the most superficial observer. Considering the plans of the enemy, and the distribution of his forces—considering that the Allied army, too, had assumed an exactly similar position with a smaller arc—34,000 in the centre and 39,000 on each wing; and, lastly, considering that each of these wings had, in spite of some losses, held its ground against tremendous odds, it was evident that a chance of safety, and even of victory still existed.[1] Everything depended, for the

[1] The following military details are all taken from the military authorities above cited.

Allies, on taking advantage of the dispersion of the enemy's forces, and on collecting their own, so as, though weaker as a whole, to be stronger at the decisive point. To effect this there were several different ways. Coburg could either put the weak centre of the French *hors de combat* in a few days, and then turning to the left, and cooperating with Kaunitz, roll up the French army of the Sambre, before Pichegru could send a single battalion from Flanders to its aid. Or, on the contrary, he might direct the blows of the Allied centre to the right, in conjunction with York and Clerfait, against Pichegru's base in Flanders; if he succeeded in breaking through at this point, the main body of the enemy would be cut off from Lille, from its supplies, and its line of retreat, and be forced into the midst of a hostile country with its back upon the equally hostile sea. Of these two enterprises the former—the march upon the Sambre army—was the easier, as the enemy could be attacked on this point with decidedly superior forces; but the latter was more effectual, if it succeeded, because it would destroy the best part of the French army. Moreover Kaunitz had stood his ground alone on the Sambre, while Clerfait and York sent urgent petitions from Flanders for assistance. The Prince of Coburg, therefore, was decidedly in favour of leading the army of the centre to Tournay and Flanders.

The Emperor had just sufficient power of comprehension to enable him to understand the force of these considerations, and to incline him to sanction the new plan. But there were other powers and influences at work at head-quarters, which pertinaciously hemmed his way to this resolution at every turn. We may take it for granted that Thugut adhered more firmly than ever to his own views. The official summons from Catharine had arrived in Vienna, calling upon Austria to send an auxiliary force against Poland; and Count Cobenzl, the Austrian ambassador, wrote from St. Petersburg, that the Empress, in case of the Emperor's compliance, would award him a very ample share of the booty. Similar

demands and offers arrived from Italy. The Archduke Ferdinand in Milan asked for speedy and numerous reinforcements; and at the same time the arrival of a Sardinian ambassador was announced, who was empowered to offer Francis solid gain for effectual support. Of almost still greater importance was the circumstance, that while Austria was importuned for aid from all quarters of the world, the desired opportunity of making peace with the French Republic presented itself sooner than had been expected. At Valenciennes, the epistolary head-quarters of the Allies, a Frenchman arrived, about this time, who called himself Count de Montgaillard, and represented himself as an *Émigré* persecuted by the democratic tyrants. He was in reality a political adventurer, like many whom these troubled times produced, a peasant's son named Jaques Roques from the village of Montgaillard. He was known even at school as a worthless fellow; he became a soldier, then a speculator, and during the Revolution an adventurer at the service of all parties. After the 10th of August he had joined Danton's party, and had been frequently employed in the Belgian intrigues, and as a double spy about the persons of Coburg and Mercy. After the fall of Danton he had passed as an ever-ready tool into the hands of Robespierre, and he now expressed a wish to make important overtures to the Emperor in person, on the part of the Committee of Public Safety. As he was known to Count Mercy as an agent, though a subordinate one, of the Parisian Rulers, he was admitted to an audience; and he then came forward with the declaration, that France was prepared to make a general peace on the *status quo ante*. He made this statement, however, as a proof, not of the weakness, but of the philanthropy of Robespierre, demanded a rapid decision, and, in case of refusal, threatened the Emperor with the dagger, which, he said, was prepared for all crowned heads. His conduct appeared at the first moment so unbecoming, that the Emperor

gave orders for his arrest: but Thugut and Trautmannsdorf thought it nevertheless expedient to take his overtures into consideration. His proposal was that France should give up her continental conquests—Savoy, Nice, and the occupied districts of Belgium—and receive back in return Corsica and the West India islands. By such a peace, Austria and Sardinia would make good their losses, while England, on the contrary, would have to give up her conquests. This consideration rendered it probable that the Committee of Public Safety was not sincere in its overtures, but was only trying to throw an apple of discord between Austria and England. On the other hand, the Austrian government was sufficiently informed of the exhaustion of France, and the difficult position of the Committee of Public Safety, to render them unwilling to give up the chance of a serious proposal of peace; and Thugut, especially, was the less inclined to do so, because he had long desired such a turn of affairs. However this might be, Montgaillard's proposition was extremely acceptable to Austria: what England would say to it was to be seen hereafter; and as a letter of Lord Grenville's just arrived, reporting that Montgaillard had been announced to him also, the Frenchman, in spite of all his regicidal threats, was sent, not to Paris, but to London.

In such a conjuncture of affairs, it did not seem wise to undertake any important offensive movement, which, whether it resulted in victory or defeat, might suddenly check Robespierre's love of peace, and would, at any rate, remove the Austrian army still farther away from the Rhine, Poland, and Italy, and involve it, perhaps irrecoverably, in this remote and unfortunate theatre of war. Meantime news of fresh disasters arrived from Flanders, which, for the moment, removed all uncertainty, and once more gave the predominance to the war-party. Clerfait's attempt against Courtrai had entirely failed, in consequence of the triple superiority of the enemy. After a sharp contest, on the 11th of May, he was

obliged to make a hasty retreat, and withdrew in tolerable order, though very hard pressed, to the northwest, into the neighbourhood of Ghent. York looked on with grief, but was unable to afford assistance, being himself violently attacked on the 10th of May by general Bonneau, As at Cateau, he owed it entirely to the excellence of his cavalry that the French broke off the contest with heavy loss; but there was no possibility of his doing anything at all to support Clerfait, or to rescue Ghent. The Emperor would now hear of no further delay. He saw before him the threatened ruin of a brave companion in arms, and the complete inundation of Flanders; Holland began to fear for her maritime border-lands, and Lord Elgin, the English plenipotentiary at head-quarters, exhorted him not to allow the French to obtain a firm footing on the coast; orders were immediately issued to the different divisions of the Allied centre for a grand flank march to Flanders.

We have seen what splendid possibilities were connected with such a resolution, but we must also mention at once the difficulties which lay in the way of success. The enemy, who had of late been incessantly recruiting, and had thereby gradually rendered his garrisons disposable for field service, was continually growing stronger in Flanders, and had now no less than 100,000 men on this theatre of the war.[1] The success of the Allies, therefore, depended upon their making up for this difference in numbers by bold and simple movements, by neglecting all minor objects, and bringing all their force to bear upon the decisive point. To this end it would have been possible to borrow a few thousand men from the victorious Kaunitz for the temporary protection of Landrécy, to call in all the other corps of communication to the main army, and then, in conjunction with York and Clerfait, to open the attack upon Pichegru with 80,000 men.

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[1] Including Michaud's division.

Even this, the greatest force which could be collected, was, as we know, far inferior to that of the enemy; the highest rapidity and energy too were indispensable to success, and even cool calculation must regard the boldest daring as the only real prudence. But the sentiments required for such a course of action, were, unfortunately for the Coalition, entirely wanting at the imperial head-quarters. Thugut's and Waldeck's opposition hung like a clog on the whole undertaking, and both Coburg and Mack shrank in terror from every grand and apparently dangerous measure. They clung to every foot of soil which they had once occupied, were unwilling to leave either the Sambre or their centre unprotected, and thought it necessary to oppose to every hostile corps a fragment of their own force. They therefore left Orange behind with 11,000 men at Landrécy, and a second corps of 4,000 men near Denain on the Scheldt. The auxiliary force for the expedition to Flanders was hereby reduced to 23,000 men, so that the total strength of the army destined to carry out this great scheme was only 62,000 men. Not contented with this, they drew up a plan of attack which was, indeed, clearly directed to the furtherance of the great object—the cutting off of the enemy from his own country—but condemned their own army of 62,000 men—which had to contend against 100,000—to complete impotence, by its interminable division.

We have now arrived at a point at which the fate of the whole campaign, and the course of the modern history of the world, was decided; it is indispensable therefore to enter somewhat more fully into the details of the war than is our wont, and first of all to gain as clear a view as possible of the nature of the ground.

The soil on which we now find ourselves has been for centuries the scene of great events, and consequently of great bloodshed. It was hence, from the shores of the Scheldt and the Lys, that the Salian Franks once began their triumphant march for the overthrow of Gaul. It was here that

in later times the Empire of the Guelphs sank in the dust before the victorious arms of Philip Augustus; it was here that the dukes of Burgundy, in their struggle with the freedom of the Flemish cities, laid the foundation of their power, which was destined to embrace the world; it was here, too, that Louis XIV, sinking beneath deadly blows after his long career of haughty prosperity, fought his last desperate battles against Marlborough and Eugene. The ground, on which the fate of Europe was once more to be decided, is about 51 miles long and 46 miles broad, and forms an almost regular square, between the coast of the North Sea on the west, and the Scheldt, which runs almost parallel with it, on the east. It is an almost level, richly cultivated, and thickly populated, district. Between numerous stately and flourishing cities, village succeeds village, each of which contains well-built houses, and is surrounded with gardens and orchards. The fields are everywhere enclosed by ditches full of water, high hedges, or close rows of trees, which entirely prevent the evolutions of cavalry. Every brook forms soft banks, and swampy environs, in the rich and crumbling soil; so that the smallest streams can only be passed on strong bridges, and no rapid progress by the side of the high roads can be expected, even from infantry, and still less any change in the line of operations. It is easy to see what immense advantages such a soil affords for a judicious defence; and we shall see that it everywhere determined the character of the now impending struggle.

About thirteen miles west of the Scheldt the Lys enters this territory, flows parallel with the main stream past Ménin and Courtrai as far as Deynse, and then turns to the east, and falls into the Scheldt near Ghent. The two rivers, therefore, enclose on Flemish ground a long triangle, on the southern or French side of which lies Lille, the most important of the border fortresses, and on the Flemish side, Tournai, on the Scheldt. The position of the hostile armies

in these regions was as follows. The French had encamped the divisions of Bonneau and Osten, as the base of their attack, close by Lille; Moreau and Souham, proceeding thence towards the north, had first taken Ménin, then occupied Courtrai, and, still moving northwards, were just on the point of dealing the next blow against Clerfait. To cover their long extended line in the west, Michaud was stationed a few leagues off, with his front towards Ypres.

Of the Allies, as we have seen, Clerfait stood with 16,000 men near Thielt, on the opposite side of the Lys, and on the north of the French column of attack, by which he was separated from his colleagues; York, again, with 18,000 men more, was at Tournai, east of Lille, opposite to Bonneau, and almost in the rear of Souham and Moreau. It is evident that if the force of the Duke had been raised to 40—50,000 men, by sending him all the troops of the centre, there was a chance of quickly crushing Bonneau by such superior numbers. If this attempt succeeded, Moreau and Souham would have been cut off from all their resources, and would hardly have escaped a fatal disaster. There was, as we have said, some idea of such a plan at Coburg's head-quarters, but the prince could not make up his mind to the consistent execution of it. He did indeed designate the troops of Landrécy—23,000 men under the Archduke Charles and general Kinski—for an attack upon Bonneau: but instead of sending York in the same direction, he divided his corps into two columns, which were ordered to march against Roubaix and Tourcoin, close by Courtrai, and there to attack Moreau and Souham. A few leagues farther to the north, again, the Hanoverians were to try their luck against Mouscron; and Clerfait, lastly, was to make a great circuit round the French army towards the west, and then, depending on his own resources, to force his way through the enemy to the Duke of York at Tourcoin. In this way they hoped to break the French line, and drive them into certain de-

struction. All the details were carefully thought out by Mack with the map in his hand: all depended, however, on the double supposition, that every column would punctually make its appearance on the battle-field at the right moment, and that the 100,000 French, who lay between them, would not tear the skilfully formed net by some unexpected counter-movement.

The latter contingency, it is true, seemed for the present highly improbable. For Pichegru so little expected a serious attack, that he had just left his army in Flanders, and repaired to the Sambre to administer consolation and encouragement to the defeated generals. Souham and Moreau felt equally secure; and when, on the 16th of May, their outposts reported some movements in Clerfait's camp, they set in motion more than 40,000 men of their divisions, and without any suspicion of danger in their rear, crossed the Lys to administer a severe lesson to the Austrian general. And thus the villages Mouscron, Roubaix and Tourcoin, which they had hitherto occupied, were left with weak defences, and the Allies might have begun their attack on the 17th, from the side of Tournai, under the most favourable auspices. The small corps of Hanoverians, indeed, was repulsed from Mouscron with great bloodshed; but the Imperial general Otto stormed Tourcoin after a severe contest, and the English guards, under York in person, fixed themselves in Roubaix towards evening, before the French generals could recall their main force over the Lys. There is no doubt, therefore, that they would have been still less able on this day to help General Bonneau, who was thirteen miles further to the south, if Coburg had thrown his whole force upon him; and consequently that the plan which we have just sketched was perfectly feasible on the morning of the 17th.

Now, however, the advantages gained by York and Otto were completely isolated. Clerfait only ventured to proceed very slowly in a country swarming with enemies, and towards the evening halted at Werwick, on the left bank

of the Lys—several miles distant from Tourcoin, his point of union with York. The Archduke Charles, again, after a long and toilsome march, did not reach General Bonneau until the 17th at midday; his troops, although panting and thirsty from the heat of the sun, made a gallant charge as soon as they came in sight of the enemy, and drove the French under the guns of Lille; but they were far from being able entirely to crush the enemy, and render him incapable of further resistance. Consequently when, towards the evening, the thunder of the cannon gradually died away over the vast battle-field, the position of the Allies was this—that neither Charles, nor Wallmoden, nor Clerfait, had performed their task; and therefore that Otto and York, who, each with about 8,000 men had penetrated far into the enemy's line, found themselves in a most perilous position, exposed on all sides to the attack of the French. They had a sort of presentiment of the state of things at head-quarters, and sent word to the Duke of York that he should receive a reinforcement of 15 battalions from the Archduke Charles, in the course of the following morning. In the middle of the night further orders arrived, directing him to press forward on the following morning, and try to form a junction with Clerfait, in order to complete the rout of the enemy.

But while the Allies were wasting the time in messages and promises, the French were acting. On the afternoon of the 17th, when the various plans of the former were being matured, Generals Souham, Moreau, Macdonald and Reynier, assembled in conference at Menin. Reynier pointed out how easy it would be to throw overwhelming masses upon Tourcoin from different sides, before the enemy's wings could send aid to their threatened centre. Souham eagerly took up the idea. This general had served for five years, up to 1789, as a common cavalry soldier. A giant frame of immense strength, and a courage equal to any test, combined with a lively understanding and sound judgment, gave him con-

siderable influence among his colleagues at the outbreak of the Revolution. After the war commenced he rose rapidly from grade to grade, and was made general of division at 33 years of age. The soldiers used to say that under him they should not be defeated; an agent of the Ministry wrote to Carnot, that Souham was a patriot "who would squash Pitt and Coburg like mellow pears." Such a man was, of course, highly delighted at the idea of frustrating the enemy's offensive movements by a sudden sally. The others gave their assent, and appeals for assistance were immediately sent off to Osten and Bonneau. All the troops—more than 40,000—which had stood opposed to Clerfait on the other side of the Lys, were marched rapidly back to Courtray, to fall from the north upon Tourcoin and Otto's right flank. Moreau posted himself in person at Werwick with 8,000 men against Clerfait, thereby securing the rear of the French position, and enabling York's late opponents – about 12,000 men—to make an attack in front on the lost places. Lastly, Bonneau stationed about 8,000 men at Lille to watch the Archduke, and about 4 o'clock in the morning he fell with 18,000 men, from the south, upon the Duke of York's left wing at Roubaix. And thus at the first dawn of day, the two columns of the Allied centre found themselves attacked by more than four times their own force. Their position was, from the very first a desperate one; York and Otto had dispersed their troops in several small villages, and the attack was made simultaneously upon all points, with overwhelming numbers. General Monfrault stood at Tourcoin with 6 battalions of Otto's column, and the Hessian general Hanstein, with 2 battalions, a league farther back, at Watrelos. York had posted General Abercrombie with 7 battalions between the villages of Mouveaux and Roubaix; the Hessian bodyguards at Lannoy, to cover his rear; and two Austrian battalions on the road to Tourcoin, to keep up his communication with Otto.

After a short but sharp engagement Tourcoin was first taken by the enemy, whereupon Monfrault took up a new position in the open field, close behind the village, and for three hours maintained the unequal combat in close order and with unshaken courage. His troops formed a large square, against which the French columns were shattered to pieces. To the right and left, swarms of French tirailleurs and cavalry skirmishers filled the plain; while in the rear the thunder of the battle which was raging round Watrelos became louder and louder. At the latter place the Hessian guards were attacked by no less than three brigades, but they bore up against these fearful odds with iron firmness, and it was not until nearly 8 o'clock, when their ammunition began to fail, that they retired slowly and in good order, continually firing on their pursuers, behind the little river Espierre. The rear-guard was just about to pass the brook when a few scattered horsemen came up at full gallop, pursued by French chasseurs, and making signs from a distance to the grenadiers for help and protection. It was the Duke of York, who having been repulsed at Mouveaux, and, as he thought, surrounded by the enemy at Lannoy, had given up the command of his column to general Abercrombie, and ridden across country to Watrelos, intending to escape in that direction to the Imperial head-quarters. Here, however, he was in more danger than ever, since the French light troops in Monfrault's rear were swarming in every field; he owed it to the swiftness of his horse alone that he was not immediately seized. Upon hearing his cries the Hessians without hesitation faced about against the enemy, whom they put to hasty flight with their last shots; the duke had so completely lost his presence of mind that he waded through the muddy brook close by the bridge, and after reaching the opposite shore galloped off without stopping. The most melancholy consequence of this occurrence was, that the Hessians, retarded by their self-sacrificing courage, were over-

taken by stronger bodies of the enemy, and suffered great loss in crossing the water. Nevertheless this gallant regiment had no sooner reached the opposite shore than they once more took up a strong position, and, with the aid of some Austrian reserves, resisted all the attacks of the French on the same spot throughout the day. How important their heroic firmness was for the army, was sensibly felt, immediately afterwards, by Monfrault's column. The latter held its ground behind Tourcoin till nearly nine o'clock, and then, as the main road was blocked up by the loss of Watrelos, retreated by a side road, at first in good order, but being more and more impetuously assailed by the French, their flank was at last broken through. Hereupon the most terrible confusion arose, the battalions got mixed with one another, larger and larger bodies broke into disorderly flight, and at last the whole mass poured back in wild haste to Tournai, close past the position of the Hessians. If these too had given way, and the fugitives had found the enemy in their place, hardly a man could have escaped.

The column of general Abercrombie experienced a similar fate during the same hours. He, too, at first resisted the superior numbers of the enemy with heroic gallantry. The English guards stood as if rooted to the ground; and when Abercrombie at last gave the order to retreat, they retired slowly from Mouveaux to renew the same hopeless contest at Roubaix with the same *sang-froid*. They, too, like Monfrault, were threatened by an overwhelming danger in the rear; for Bonneau, attacking Roubaix on one side with one half of his division, had hurled the other, at 6 o'clock in the morning, against the Hessian regiment of body-guards at Lannoy, the taking of which would have cut off the English from all possibility of escape. Happily for them the body-guards did their duty in the same way as the Hessian infantry two leagues off at Watrelos. Surrounded on all sides by eight times their numbers, incessantly attacked by fresh assailants, sometimes with the fire of artillery, and

sometimes with the bayonet, they kept up struggle for seven hours without yielding or wavering. They occupied the attention of the hostile column so completely, that not a battalion of the latter was disposable to harass Abercrombie's retreat. When the English retiring from Roubaix—the regiments of the line already in disorderly flight, the guards still fighting in close order—came about 10 o'clock into the neighbourhood of Lannoy, the French could only send one regiment of cavalry against Abercrombie. Their charge, however, produced so great an effect, that the English guards too lost their self-possession, broke their ranks and hurried in breathless haste to Tournai. The Hessians still maintained themselves in Lannoy till one o'clock, and when they had exhausted all their ammunition, their Colonel, Eschwege, after firing his last round, forced his way with the bayonet through the close masses of the enemy, but not without leaving a third of his men behind him as killed or prisoners. The enemy pursued no further, but contented themselves with sending a column from this point against the flank of the Hessians and the Austrians on the Espierre. A lively fire of artillery once more began; but as the French made no attempt with cold steel, General Hanstein was able to hold his position till nearly seven o'clock in the evening, and to lead back his troops uninjured to the general *rendezvous*—the camp at Marquain—close before the gates of Tournai.

When they arrived there, the same question burned upon every lip—the question, what had become of the division of the Archduke Charles, and why he had exposed them to the brunt of the enemy's overpowering forces without making a single effort to support them? In fact, the conduct of this wing, on the 18th, was not the least singular occurrence in this singular battle. We have seen that the Archduke and General Kinsky had, on the 17th, driven back the French over the Marque to Lille; Kinsky quietly bivouacked during the night at Cheraing and the Archduke at Lesquin. Cheraing

is less than five miles, and Lesquin, less than ten miles, distant from Lannoy; and the latter is hardly a league from Monveaux. At Cheraing, therefore, every shot which was exchanged between the English and Moreau's division, after four o'clock, must have reached the ears of the Austrians; the thunder of the cannon from Tourcoin and Watrelos must have been heard in the distance, and the advance of the enemy from all sides might be followed by the direction of the sound. Kinsky's van was formed of Hessian chasseurs, who could not imagine why no orders came to begin their march. Their leader, Captain Ochs, in angry impatience, hastened to the General at six o'clock in the morning, to represent to him that the greatest disasters threatened their comrades in arms—that they ought to hurry to their assistance as speedily as possible—and that only very small divisions of the enemy stood in their way. But general Kinsky declined all discussion on the subject in a cold and irritable manner, saying that he was ill, and was no longer in command. And thus the troops lay inactive in the fields, watching the progress of the smoke which now enveloped Lannoy also, while the roar of artillery grew louder and nearer, and were not allowed to take a single step to support their hard-pressed comrades. Similar quiet reigned in the camp of the Archduke. It is said that the order to lead fifteen battalions towards midday to Lannoy, had reached him as early as five o'clock in the morning, but that he was lying during the whole of the forenoon deprived of his senses by an attack of cramp, and therefore could not fulfil the order.[1] Meanwhile the Emperor, Coburg, Mack and Waldeck, remained during the morning in Templeuve, and afterwards in Marquain, less than five miles from the sick Kinsky, and less than ten from the senseless Archduke, and must therefore have received intelligence of the unhappy condition of

[1] In his own report he mentions attack of cramp. Witzleben III, 216, the receipt of the order but not the 220.

these Generals by seven o'clock at latest. The discussions which then took place between them, the suggestions of honour and courage, of prudence and restraint, which were then made, the amount of painful indignation, or cold-blooded calculation, which was there displayed, no one of the parties has ever disclosed. Meanwhile the hours passed away, Tourcoin and Watrelos were taken, Abercrombie defeated, and at last even Lannoy lost to the Allies. Then about four o'clock in the afternoon, the longed-for order to march towards Roubaix reached Kinsky's van; the troops prepared with zeal, not indeed to avert the evil which had happened, but at any rate to avenge it, when a new order arrived from head-quarters—this time signed by the Prince of Waldeck—to the effect that the Duke of York was already entirely defeated, and that the column was to march back to the camp at Marquain. This was a confession that the day was lost, that the grand offensive movement of the Allies was abandoned.

Who can decide whether an energetic and well-timed intervention of the Archduke might not have completely changed the fortune of the day, and turned the defeat into victory? No one can deny the possibility of such a turn of affairs, since the French, with 80,000 men, had spent twelve toilsome hours in beating 16,000; and the advance of Charles would in all probability have relieved Clerfait, who, on the morning of the 18th, had successfully advanced from Werwick, but was obliged to make a hasty retreat over the Lys on the 19th. However this may be, the Emperor's resolution to sacrifice his Allies and spare his own troops, irrevocably determined the fate of the campaign, and the victory of France; and nothing but the narrowness of the military horizon of Francis II could have enabled him to deceive himself upon this point, even for a few days. The French had opened the campaign with greatly superior forces, they had daily added to their strength in spite of all their losses, and their numbers swelled in every part of the theatre of

war, in a manner highly threatening to the position of the Allies. The latter had no reinforcements to look to, no substitutes for those who fell. Nay more, while the French recruits were daily forming themselves in the school of war, the Allies, on the contrary, lost an old soldier in every man that fell; and the value of the residue declined, because, of course, the best men exposed themselves most freely. Under such circumstances nothing but decided mental superiority could turn the scale in favour of the Allies. If the talent of their generals did not break up the masses of the enemy by heavy and rapid blows, the mere weight of the latter must at last inevitably drag down the scale. But the Emperor had missed the opportunity of such successes on the very first day of the campaign; he had missed it after the fall of Landrécy; and now, on the evening of the 18th of May, it was lost for the third time and for ever. If, as we may suppose, the Prince of Waldeck procured that decisive order in Marquain, he gained thereby a point of the greatest importance to his whole political system; for he thereby brought the Belgian war into such a position, that he might with unanswerable arguments advocate the necessity of a retreat. Thugut had hitherto declared that any reinforcement of the army was impossible, and that the only safety lay in sudden and overpowering attacks; but now the time for such operations was gone for ever, and the war in Belgium had become utterly hopeless. On the 19th of May he wrote a furious letter to Colloredo, filled with complaints of the course of military operations hitherto, but he had already come to a resolution in his general policy, which inevitably guided this course to a complete catastrophe.

One more opportunity, however, was granted to the troops, at the very last moment, of showing that the coming disasters were not owing to the bluntness of their swords. On the evening of the 18th, it is true, infinite confusion prevailed in Tournai; the soldiers of York and Monfrault roamed about the town and the camp, complaining and almost mu-

tinous, and the most terrible consequences must have immediately ensued if the enemy had followed up their victory with vigour. But when Pichegru hesitated for three days, the order and confidence of the Allied troops were quickly restored. In a Council of war held on the 19th, the Prince of Orange was the only man who maintained that all thoughts of aggression must be given up, while the other generals, including even Waldeck, advocated the possibility of another advance.[1] Coburg, especially, proposed that all the divisions of the army should be drawn together; and he promised with his united forces to give the enemy a decided defeat within eight or ten days.[2] Meanwhile efforts were made to collect and refresh the troops, and to extend and strengthen their position. Lastly, on the 22nd, Pichegru moved up to the attack, with all his forces, along the whole extent of the Allied line. Another contest, which lasted twelve hours, was begun, in which the Hanoverians, especially, displayed the most brilliant courage. In the evening the French were obliged to retreat at all points, with a loss of more than 5,000 men and five guns. By this success the remembrance of the disasters of the 18th was completely effaced from the minds of the soldiers, and the Emperor, too, who had by no means spared himself during the battle, once more looked forward with childlike hope to the future chances of the war.

But the fruitlessness of this fresh bloodshed was evident to every competent judge. Thugut saw that his time was come, and he determined without further delay to call upon the Emperor to make a radical change in the policy of Austria. On the 23rd he had just signed a treaty with the Sardinian ambassador at Valenciennes, by which the two Powers mutually promised to continue their efforts against the French. It was further agreed between them that if they should succeed in conquering French territory, the

[1] York to Dundas, 19th May. [2] Witzleben III, 224.

latter should fall to Sardinia, and that the king, in return, should cede to Austria a portion of Piedmont of half the size. The prospect of new acquisitions in Lombardy, which was thus opened, completed the indifference with which Thugut looked on the irrecoverably lost Belgium. But it was another and more urgent interest, which was destined to furnish the means of damping the previous zeal of the Emperor against France—namely the Polish question, and jealousy of Prussia.

CHAPTER V.

EVACUATION OF BELGIUM.

News of the progress of Prussia in Poland.—Thugut and Waldeck wish to lead back the army to Germany.—They carry their point with the Emperor.—Francis resolves to return to Vienna.—Carnot's perverse plans for a landing in England.—Siege and capture of Ypres.—Fresh attacks of the French on the Sambre.—Departure of the Emperor.—Carnot summons Jourdan to Belgium.—Army of the Sambre and Meuse.—Battle of Fleurus.—Retreat of the allies on the Meuse.—Progress of French in the Palatinate and Pyrenees.—Pause in warlike operations in Belgium and Italy.—George III., king of Corsica.

Thugut had received the first news of the Polish insurrection while he was still in Vienna. Such an event could not, in itself, be unwelcome to him, for he had been working towards a Polish acquisition for Austria during the whole of the summer of 1793, and he now saw the chief hindrance to his wishes—the Russian-Polish treaty of guarantee—swept away by the revolt of Kosciusko. He would doubtless at once have entered with delight on the path of conquest in Poland, had not the thought of his Prussian rival again hemmed his way. "Still worse" he wrote on the 10th of April to Count Cobenzl, "than the fear of the Polish insurgents, is my dread of new measures of Prussian dishonesty and turbulence; the Prussian troops have begun their march towards Poland, and General Igelström makes no protest, but enters into an understanding with them. But we can by no means allow the Prussians to remain for any length of time in Poland, still less to take up a position in Cracow. The Emperor desires no change, and no acquisition in Poland, but only the right of garrison in certain border fortresses. But all this would be changed by a fresh aggrandisement of Prussia. Russia will know how to prevent

this, and we beg to be informed what she intends to do in opposition to Prussian rapacity. Reinforcement of the Russian army is the first thing to be done; and then—in the name of Heaven!—postponement of the Turkish war. The Emperor approves of the Russian plans, and is ready to cooperate for their fulfilment; but at this moment the war with Turkey would be fatal. Prussia would forthwith attempt new encroachments; Austria, in order to oppose her, would be forced to make peace with France on any terms. Above all we must be fully assured that Russia will not share her favour between us and Prussia. If Russia were to allow Prussian troops in Poland, we too should have to march in, to secure our portion in the last Partition."

This despatch, as we see, contains a complete programme, which leaves nothing to be desired in clearness and decision. If Russia would remove the Prussians from Poland, Austria too would forego the acquisition of large Polish provinces, and rather endeavour, according to the previous understanding, to conquer French border lands, and subsequently share Turkey with the Russians. But if Russia allowed Prussia to remain in Poland, or, still worse, to extend her dominions in that country, either by direct encouragement, or, indirectly, by a premature war against Turkey, then Austria would do all in her power to prevent it, and, if things came to the worst, make peace with France on any conditions whatever.

The second case, as we know, of this alternative occured in Poland. The Russians, hard pressed by the victorious insurgents, not only did not expel the Prussians from Poland, but urgently called upon them for aid. Not a small Prussian corps, but a stately army led by the king in person, entered Poland, and marched towards the South to Cracow—the very point at which Thugut would endure no rival.

On the 25th of April Catharine announced this state of things to the Emperor, and pointed out the indispensableness of Prussian aid, adding the suspicious remark, that she had no intentions of attacking the Turks, but that she was

apprehensive of hostile movements on their part. At the same time Kosciusko, alarmed by the approach of the Prussians, sent to the Archduke, as Governor of Galicia, an offer, to give up Cracow to the Imperial troops, if Austria would remain neutral in the Polish war. These pieces of intelligence reached Thugut after the middle of May, about the time in which the battle of Tourcoin was fought. The moment for decision had come. The Archduke had begged for speedy instructions; a blow might any day be struck in Poland which would deliver Cracow into the hands of the Prussians. No more exact intelligence of Catharine's resolutions had arrived from St. Petersburg; but at all events the negotiations commenced in December and February were now suspended, and perhaps the entire good will of the Empress had been restored to the Prussians, who had so promptly come to her assistance.

What was to be done in circumstances like these? On the main point there could be no doubt; a promise of neutrality to Poland was not to be thought of, because it would have broken off the all-important alliance with Russia. But perhaps it might be possible to get Cracow out of the hands of the Poles by an ambiguous, encouraging, and yet not binding, negotiation. It was, of course, far more probable that Kosciusko would then refuse to treat, and that the Prussians would thereupon conquer the city; then, indeed, nothing would remain but to enter with full force into the Polish dispute—thereby giving an impulse to the friendship of Russia towards the Emperor—and to wrest Cracow from the Prussians by diplomatic means if possible, but, if necessary, by force of arms. We already know what Thugut thought of Prussia; he believed that the King was ready to seize the first opportunity of invading the provinces of Austria. When, therefore, he prepared to acquire Cracow for Austria, nothing seemed to him more probable than an open breach, perhaps an immediate war, with Prussia. But if it did come to this, nothing could be more dangerous to Austria than

the absence of her most considerable army in Belgium, far from home, with the Prussian troops between it and the unprotected provinces. The Austrian forces, then, must, be rescued as soon as possible from their perilous position, and be forthwith recalled to German ground, to inspire respect into their Prussian rivals, and procure free scope for the imperial policy.

As far as our historical evidence enables us to surmise, these were the views, which, since the last warlike operations, prevailed in the minds of the leading men about the person of the Emperor. Just as Thugut reached Tournay, General Mack, who was furious at the failure of his grand plan, gave in his resignation as chief of the staff. He had no longer any hope of holding Belgium against the superior forces of the enemy, and began to investigate the arguments of his political adversaries, and to consider whether, under present circumstances, it was not the duty of Austria to refrain from sacrificing her army, the most important prop of the State, in a task which had become impossible, and to withdraw it from Belgium to Germany to protect the other interests of the Empire.[1] The Prince of Waldeck, who succeeded Mack on the staff, undertook to make himself the organ of these views in the highest quarter.[2] He unreservedly expressed his conviction to the Emperor that

[1] Conf. his memorial of the 29th of May in Witzleben III, 265.

[2] When speaking with the Duke of York some days later, he threw all the blame on Thugut, which the former immediately reported to England. But York soon learned that Waldeck agreed with Thugut's views and advocated them to the Emperor. (Witzleben III, 275, 317.) He declared the same opinion, somewhat later, to Count Döhnhoff himself (Döhnhoff to the King of Prussia Aug. 2nd. "*Waldeck m'a dit en propres termes que c'était lui qui avait proposé à l'Empereur de retirer ses troupes des Pays-Bas.*") According to a report of Lucchesini (June 19th) even Lascy himself, once the advocate of energetic warlike operations, had, under existing circumstances, lost all hope, and now proposed to give up Belgium, to reinforce the Rhine army with 50,000 men, and to sent the other troops into Bohemia; and lastly, above all things, to seek

it would be inexcusable to sacrifice the strength of the country in such remote and hopeless undertakings, instead of recalling them to the centre of Empire for more useful purposes. He therefore deprecated any further attack upon the enemy; so that the latter was able to fetch away the guns, left on the field in the flight of the preceding day, under the very eyes of the victors. The wrath of the English and Hanoverians, which had been excited by the conduct of the Austrians on the 18th, was now fanned afresh: officers and soldiers openly spoke of the remissness and treachery of their Allies; and the camp was filled with endless feuds between the troops of different nations. The English plenipotentiary, Lord Elgin, accosted the Imperial minister on the same day, and asked him whether Francis, after such hard struggles and such heavy losses, was not going at last to send some reinforcements to Belgium, either from his Rhine army or some other quarter. Thugut without hesitation answered in the negative, and added that it was very doubtful whether the possession of the Netherlands was worth any further efforts on the part of Austria. Elgin, not a little surprised, endeavoured to test the sincerity of the Minister; he replied that in this case England would have to confine herself to the protection of Holland, and was astounded at Thugut's indifferent reply, that such a course would be the right one, and that no better resolution could be taken than to evacuate Belgium immediately. "It is not my fault," he added, "that the Emperor did not begin the campaign by this measure." "I cannot find expressions," reported Elgin, after this conversation, to his government, "strong enough to characterize the firmness with which

a speedy peace with France." "I have learned these views," adds Lucchesini, "through General Wallis, Lascy's friend and *protégé*." That Lascy and Wallis were at that time among the most influential persons in Vienna, is as certain as the fact that the subsequent course of events was exactly in accordance with their wishes,

this fatal resolution has been adopted." The news flew rapidly through the camp, through Belgium, and soon through the whole of Europe. Very little was known of the real motives of Thugut, or of his plans in Eastern Europe; but the French agent had been observed, and the Emperor's former desire of rounding off his dominions at the expense of Bavaria was not forgotten: a suspicion, therefore, suddenly arose, which agitated men's minds far and near, that Thugut and Robespierre had come to an understanding, that France should receive Belgium, and, in return, help the Emperor to the possession of Bavaria. [1]

Meanwhile the Minister, undisturbed by these reports, laid the despatches from Vienna and Cracow before the Emperor, pointed out their high importance, and concluded by proposing that Francis should immeditately return to Vienna, and thenceforward make his whole policy turn, not on the French war, but on the Polish question. The meaning of this advice was no longer doubtful. The army was considerably weakened, the officers out of humour, the Allies alienated, and the enemy in full progress. If Belgium was to be maintained, it would be necessary for Austria to collect all her forces, to procure help from every side, and to rouse the Belgian people to the defence of their own country: it would be necessary to fill officers and soldiers with new enthusiasm, and to convince the Allies of the Emperor's sincerity. If Francis had never come to Belgium, all this might perhaps have been done without his personal intervention, but as he had himself, only four weeks before, repaired to the centre of action, his sudden departure at the most pressing crisis could not but be fatal. We may confidently assume that he was greatly surprised and agitated by Thugut's communication. He had just given the Prince of Coburg the most positive assurances, had en-

[1] Cesar from Vienna to the king of Prussia, June 22nd, according to communications from Jenisch the chief of Thugut's Bureau.

deavoured to console him, and promised the most energetic efforts in the French war.[1] He was himself very eager for the contest against the Jacobins, and a few days before, the fresh laurels of the 22nd had greatly excited his cautious nature. We may judge of his reluctance from the fact that the deliberation lasted four whole days; it was, we see, an exact counterpart to those long conversations, by which, three weeks before, General Manstein at Berlin had carried off his sovereign from the French to the Polish theatre of war. The circumstances on either side were exactly similar. In both cases the personal inclinations of the Prince were on the side of the common cause—the grand Alliance—the contest against the Revolution; and in both they were opposed by the leading Statesmen, in the interest of the selfish aggrandizement of their own particular State. In neither quarter was a complete and avowed result obtained in the first instance: but in both cases the personal wishes of the monarch were virtually overborne by the particular interests of the respective Governments.

On the 24th Coburg received orders from the Emperor to summon all the generals to a council of war, and to consider the question, in what manner the complete overthrow of the Allies in Flanders might be prevented, provided that they still remained victorious on the Sambre. The very wording of the question indicated the feelings of the Austrian cabinet, and the council of war was not slow in meeting them. Although Coburg was of opinion, that by collecting all their forces on the Sambre, a fortunate turn might even now be given to the campaign, yet the same generals, who, before the late battle, had voted for an energetic attack upon the enemy, were now, after the victory, just as unanimous in declaring that all further efforts were hopeless. To his angry astonishment, York found himself the only one who still maintained the possibility and neces-

[1] The reports of Elgin and York.

sity of a resolute advance against the enemy.[1] All the others concurred in the opinion, that Belgium was no longer tenable, that the evacuation of the country was unavoidable. The general view of the question entertained in the highest quarters appears in a memorial of General Mack, which was signed on the 23d of May, and which professes to be the result of deliberations held with the Emperor himself.[2] This result is, that military success against the French was no longer to be hoped for, and still less the conquest of a border province of France; that, on the other hand, the opening of negotiations of peace with the Republic was both safe and advisable; that the only object was to obtain as favourable terms as possible; that, in this case, the acquisition of some French border fortresses appeared hardly feasible, and that it would be advantageous to Austria, only on condition that the Maritime Powers and the Belgian Estates would furnish the money and troops necessary to garrison them; that the question might, indeed, be put to the Maritime Powers in this shape, but that there was little chance of success; and, lastly, that the abandonment of Belgium would be no injury to Austria, and that England might in future do what she pleased with that country.

Whilst Austria thus gave up all hopes of success in the war in Belgium, while all her interest and all her forces were about to be directed against Cracow, she had to suffer additional vexation, at the same moment, from the Belgian Estates. The ever-zealous Count Mercy had just called on them for a gratuity of four million florins. He had indulged the pleasing hope, that the personal presence of the Emperor himself would remove all opposition; and he had now to learn that his proposition was entirely and uncon-

[1] Witzleben III, 258, York to Dundas, May, 26. — [2] Witzleben III, 268. Mack puts all his propositions in the form of questions; but the order in which they occur leaves no doubt as to the answers.

ditionally rejected. The Belgian clergy, who were requested to make a patriotic sacrifice, not of their church plate, but of that which they used at their own tables, drily answered, that they had long ago sent all such valuable property to Holland.[1] Once more did Belgium, in defence of which the best blood of Austria had been so lately shed, manifest in this way its old self-will and unproductiveness. How long were the most important interests of Austria to be imperilled in the maintenance of such a worthless possession?

Under the combined influence of these impressions, the Emperor resolved upon the decisive step. In the first place directions were sent to the Archduke Palatine at Lemberg, to induce the Poles to deliver up Cracow, by holding out alluring but indefinite prospects. It was then resolved to promise the Russians the most powerful support against the Polish insurrection, but at the same time to ask for the closest and most intimate understanding between the two Imperial Courts, to facilitate which, the Emperor was to return to Vienna. But above all, Russia was called upon to do her utmost in opposition to Prussian malice, and to effect that an army of 33,000 Prussians should remain on the Rhine. When an agreement had been come to on this point, Austria was to undertake to lend armed assistance against Kosciusko. With regard to Belgium, even the Emperor now foresaw the disastrous catastrophe which actually took place a month afterwards; and without giving the detested order for retreat, he yet gave all the necessary instructions in case such a step should prove unavoidable.[2] He once more sent a message to the Estates of Brabant, in which he bitterly complained of the want of patriotic zeal in the country, and declared that he would no longer sacrifice the strength of other parts of his Empire in the defence of Belgium, unless they immediately granted him a

[1] Vivenot I, 125, from a report of Count O'Donnel of June 25th. — [2] Communication of Count Trautmansdorf to Count von Kollowrath in Vienna, in the Archives at Brussels.

new levy of 40,000 men. The still smouldering feud between the Government and the Estates would of itself have rendered such an effort impossible; and even if the Estates had unexpectedly shown an inclination to pass such a vote, nothing was more certain than that it would be destroyed by the impending departure of the Emperor. Even the most zealous adherents of Thugut's system could urge no reason for a sudden retreat of the army, which, moreover, the Emperor would never have consented to. On the contrary, consideration for England, whose views on the Belgian question were sufficiently well known, was of itself sufficient to make the avoidance of every unusual step desirable. For the impending breach with Prussia—on account of which Thugut was endeavouring to withdraw the army from Belgium—rendered a good understanding with England absolutely indispensable to Austria. But England, as was well known, had no more lively interest on the whole continent than that of keeping the Austrians in Belgium; and Thugut, who at this very moment, in consequence of the Prusso-Polish complications, was wishing to relieve his own financial difficulties by English subsidies, had the strongest motives for showing the English warlike intentions, if not warlike successes. His communications to Lord Elgin had already excited a very bad feeling in London, which he now made every effort to appease, by disavowing the wishes he had so lately expressed, and representing the evacuation of Belgium as the lamenable consequence of the fortune of war. The chief object for the present was, therefore, the maintenance of the position on the Sambre, the forcing of which would have enabled the French to threaten the Allied army's line of retreat. Ten thousand men were sent from the camp at Tournay to the Sambre; but the victorious and warlike Kaunitz was recalled, and his place supplied by the Prince of Orange, the earliest opponent of the aggressive war. As the Hanoverians at the same time were put under the orders of General Clerfait,

to secure the Dutch frontier, the army at Tournai sank into a mere insignificant corps of communication; and it was by no means flattering to Coburg that the chief command was entrusted to him. No attention was paid to the four captured fortresses; it was believed that they could all stand a siege of several months, by which time it was hoped peace might have been made with Robespierre. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that though the Emperor neither determined upon, nor ordered, the evacuation of Belgium, he gave up all the measures necessary to defend the country. The army was to resist as long as possible; by this general order the Emperor sought to screen himself from the reproaches of his own conscience and of his Allies; but the exact opposite of everything which was necessary for defence was really done. Contented with this success, Thugut was now always ready to draw up encouraging and warlike epistles from the Emperor to the generals. Belgium was not yet actually given up, but it was no longer a matter of any interest to Austria.

After this the last step was taken which proclaimed the adoption of Thugut's whole system; the Emperor informed his army, by a general order, that he intended rapidly to review the troops on the Sambre, to hold one more consultation with the Estates in Brussels, and when this was done to return to Vienna, where urgent affairs of government rendered his presence indispensable. The surprise and consternation caused by this manifesto are indescribable. Although the Emperor assured the diplomatists at headquarters, that his only reason for wishing to return home was to hold a Hungarian Diet, and obtain from that country reinforcements for Belgium, no one doubted that the army would immediately follow their monarch.[1] The last patriotic

[1] Lord Auckland (a brother of Sir Morton Eden, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Thugut) a good Imperialist, wrote to Pitt on the

emotions of the Belgian Estates were completely chilled by this prospect; and as the French, at the same time, renewed their attacks on the right and left, a boundless terror filled the forsaken land. Fear, wrath and confusion, prevailed in every quarter. Some concealed all their valuable property, others prepared to flee as soon as the troops should be withdrawn: all official arrangements were broken up, the streets were filled with emigrants, and in all directions, according to the expression of an eye-witness, the image of chaos presented itself.

The French must have been immediately informed at any rate of the new distribution of the Allied forces, and this was enough, one would think, to remove all doubts as to their own future mode of action. The more important the contest on the Sambre became, the more urgent was the necessity of bringing up their main army to this theatre of war; consequently, of turning from Flanders towards the east, pursuing Coburg as closely as possible, and thus crushing their adversaries between two fires. But the Committee of Public Safety had no intention of issuing an order so dangerous to the enemy. On the contrary, immediately after the battle of Tourcoin, Pichegru received new orders from Carnot to complete his grand plan, i. e. to divert his main strength from Coburg towards the sea-coast, and with this view to capture Ypres and Bruges first of all. The enemy who had just been beaten, therefore, was not to be pursued, but leisure was to be given him to recover and

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28th of November. "From the time that the Emperor, in last May, declared his intention to return to Vienna, it was evident that the Austrian ministers were impressed by the necessity of withdrawing from the prosecution of the French war; and that they had resolved, with this view, to leave the borders of Germany, the Austrian Netherlands, and Holland, to their fate. "My old friend the Count Mercy transmitted to me from his death-bed a contrary assertion, and I must presume (that it was so? No, Auckland only says) that he believed it."

collect his strength, to deal fresh blows, perhaps, on the French flank, or at any rate to effect his retreat with the desired safety and convenience. From a military point of view such a proceeding cannot of course be justified; but it becomes intelligible on the supposition that, at this moment, the Committee of Public Safety wished to spare the Emperor, and to throw all its weight upon England—a wish which was strongly impressed upon all the measures of the French rulers at this period. On the 26th of May the Convention decreed that no more English or Hanoverian prisoners of war should be made; the Brest fleet received repeated instructions to gain decisive victories; all the organs of the government overflowed with mortal threats against "the modern Carthage." [1] Pichegru, therefore, was also obliged to obey. He divided his forces, placed two divisions to observe Coburg, and one to keep off Clerfait, and with the two others opened the siege of Ypres. This place was more considerable and in better condition than Ménin, but in consequence of the sluggishness of the government at that period, it was inefficiently prepared; e. g. the plain in front of the fortress had not been inundated by opening the sluices, because, as the report said, much property would be thereby destroyed, and the measure would meet with great opposition. The garrison consisted of more than 6,000 men, one-third Austrians, and two-thirds Hessians; the commandant was the Imperial general Salis—formerly a brave officer but now enfeebled by old age—who on the second day of the bombardment withdrew into a bomb-proof casemate, and remained in this retreat till the end of the siege. In this case, too, the resistance offered was entirely owing to the excellence of the troops, which in spite

[1] The army of the West was, indeed, obliged to send off strong divisions to reinforce the Rhine army, which had just been beaten by Möllendorf: "We must, then, wrote Carnot, postpone the attack on England, but it is by no means given up." *Guerre des Vendéens* III, 515.

of all their former disasters, disputed every inch of ground with invincible self-devotion. General Salis, on his part, placed all his hopes on the relief which he expected from without; but Clerfait, although his force had been raised to 20,000 men, did not venture to make any attack for a considerable time; and the French bombardment, which gradually destroyed one quarter of the town after another, threw the garrison into a state of deep exhaustion from the incessant exertions it was called upon to make. At last, on the 11th of June, Clerfait began to move, but was repulsed after a short engagement by Souham at Hooglede, while the garrison of Lille held the Prince of Coburg in check by a vigorous sally. Coburg was completely broken and hopeless, but Clerfait ventured on a second attack upon Hooglede on the 14th. The battle on this occasion was somewhat longer and more obstinate, but the issue was not more favourable, nor could it be so, considering the overpowering numbers of the enemy, and the complete inactivity of Coburg. The garrison at Ypres listened in anxious suspense to the distant thunder of the cannon, which alas! grew more and more distant as the battle continued. After this second failure the courage of General Salis was exhausted, and on the 15th he put the question to his officers, whether he should capitulate. They unanimously answered in the negative. On the 16th the enemy began to draw his third parallel, and in the course of the night completed a breaching battery, which, on the morning of the 17th, opened a destructive fire against the nearest bastions. Hereupon Salis again summoned a council of war; the supply of ammunition was exhausted, and the officers acknowledged the impossibility of holding out any longer. They therefore demanded an order to cut their way through the enemy, after Hammerstein's splendid example at Menin; but Salis would listen to nothing of the kind, and angrily reproved them for their unfeasible proposals. It was resolved, therefore, to offer to give up the place to the enemy on

condition that the garrison should retire unmolested; and the negociation was commenced in the course of the forenoon. But immediately afterwards the intelligence spread through the town, that the general had, without any resistance, signed the demand of Moreau that the troops should be made prisoners of war. Then, for the last time in the campaign, the pride of the brave soldiers' hearts broke forth in wild exasperation. The Hessian battalions assembled in crowds with furious cries, threatened to massacre their officers, and demanded that some one should lead them out to cut their way through the enemy, as Hammerstein had done. But they found no Hammerstein there, and dispersed at last to their quarters, as night came on, in impotent rage and humiliation. On the 19th they marched out with all the military honours. The French saluted to the sound of martial music, and the garrison was ordered to return the greeting by presenting arms for the last time, and then to give up their weapons. But upon this a new tumult arose; the soldiers left their ranks dashed their muskets on the ground, tore their colours, and threw the fragments with curses and tears at the feet of the French. "Now our honour is gone," they said, "now we will be quiet." A murmur of approbation and respect ran through the ranks of the victors; "Those are fine fellows" cried the soldiers; General Moreau rode with uncovered head along the column, and said: "These are brave men, who deserve a better fate."

Coburg was interrupted by the news of this catastrophe in his preparations for a third attempt to relieve the place; and as, at the same time, evil tidings arrived from the Sambre, he declared that he could do nothing more for Flanders, and that he should lead the Imperial troops stationed at Tournai to strengthen the army of the Sambre. The duke of York had now to undertake the protection of the Scheldt and the Dutch frontier alone, with his English, Hannoverian and Hessian troops, without any other support than Clerfait's Austrians. After Coburg had withdrawn

on the 21st, York, too, retreated, on the following day, to the right bank of the river, and stationed his troops in a wide arch, which ran first towards the north behind the Scheldt through Oudenarde to Ghent, and thence to the west, behind the Ghent canal, to Bruges and Helvetsluys. Pichegru stood opposed with double numbers to this thin girdle: if he were to throw himself with all his weight upon Tournai or Oudenarde, nothing could hinder him from breaking through York's position, reaching Brussels in three days' march with 60,000 men, and thereby separating York and Coburg in a manner equally destructive to both. How decisive such a movement would have been for the campaign, and even for the whole war, will be better seen, when we have taken a nearer view of the simultaneous events in the Eastern portion of the theatre of war—the bank of the lower Sambre.

In this quarter, as we have seen, the French had made a first attempt against the left wing of the Allies, but had been repulsed by Kaunitz with great loss, on the 14th of May, near Rouveroi. Jourdan, who had received orders to send off twenty or thirty thousand men from the Moselle army to Namur or Liége, for the purpose of harassing the Austrians, was sharply attacked by the Prussians in the Palatinate, and driven beyond Kaiserslautern. He had, therefore, enough to do to protect himself on this side, and at the same time to make his preparations, between the Moselle and the Meuse, for the march into Belgium. Affairs remained in this position on the Sambre through the whole of May. St. Just, who was at that time with the Army of Ardennes, and was arresting and beheading after the fashion of the Reign of Terror, succeeded, indeed, in driving the army once more over the river on the 20th, but had not made his arrangements more suitably than Charbonnier had done; so that Kaunitz was able to inflict another defeat on the French on the 24th, to capture 41 guns, and drive them across the Sambre with a loss of

3,000 men. When the Emperor, at this time, came to the resolution slowly to evacuate Belgium, he was justified in trusting to the ability of his army on the Sambre to hold out for a few weeks longer; especially as it had received considerable reinforcements, by which its numbers had been made almost equal to those of the enemy. It was not indeed allowed rest for a single day, for St. Just drove his generals to incessant attacks, by constantly threatening them with the scaffold; the Austrians, however, were able to maintain their ground, because the French tyrant only understood how to punish, but not to command. Thus, nothing was more evidently and urgently necessary for the French, than to bring unity into the movements of the combined army of the Sambre: yet, instead of this, St. Just ordered that Charbonnier should command on the Lower, and Desjardins on the Upper Sambre, and that the latter, especially on days of battle, should consult the generals of division, Kleber and Scherer. He paid as little regard to the consequences of this many-headed rule, as to the strength of the enemy, or the distribution of his own forces: he had nothing to say to the generals, except that they must immediately crush the enemy, on pain of losing their own heads. After the fresh defeat of the 24th he repeated this formula with increased solemnity. The generals represented to him that the troops were exhausted to the last degree, and were in need of rest; and their words were confirmed on the 25th, when Kleber's battalions, although they had not fought altogether unsuccessfully, refused to advance, stood apathetically in the midst of a shower of bullets, and could not be brought to charge with the bayonet. Nevertheless St. Just declared, with relentless brevity, that the Republic needed a victory on the following day. Once more Charbonnier ventured to protest, and reminded him that Jourdan was on his march towards the Meuse with half the Moselle army; and that it would therefore be in the highest degree perverse to imperil the

Sambre army by itself before his arrival. It was all in vain. "The Republic" repeated St. Just, needs a triumph to-morrow, and consequently an immediate attack: what it leaves to your choice is the means of obtaining the victory; choose therefore, whether you will gain it by a battle or a siege." In this imperious obstinacy he appeared to himself a very great man, superior, as a republican, to all obstacles. The officers gnashed their teeth at the tyranny which, with ignorant insolence, played with the lives of the soldiers, and the fate of the campaign; but they were obliged to obey, with wrath and contempt in their hearts. They chose the siege of Charleroi, since, as we have just seen, Charbonnier had already wished to move in this direction, and the army would in this way be brought nearer to Jourdan's sphere of operations. The execution of the plan, however, was miserably crippled by the mistakes which had once for all become inveterate; two divisions were left on the south of the Sambre, two were employed in bombarding Charleroi, and two were stationed four or five miles above that place, as a cover against the Austrians. In short, these ample forces were again dispersed in the most mischievous manner, and exposed to partial defeats. The penalty of such mistakes had soon to be paid. General Beaulieu had just arrived in Namur from Luxemburg with 10,000 men; the Emperor Francis in person approached, on the other side, with a strong army from Tournai; so that the Allies, after all their losses, were uniting at least 50,000 men at this spot, and might have attacked any single division of the enemy with crushing effect. Happily for the French, the Austrians copied the mistakes of their opponents on this occasion, as they had done at Landrécy, and dispersed more than a third of their army in larger or smaller garrisons and pickets. The Prince of Orange, therefore, who, on the 30th, undertook the command-in-chief instead of General Kaunitz, had only 32,000 men at his disposal, with which, on the 2nd of June, he fell upon the covering force of the French. A decided

success was therefore out of the question, but at any rate the excessive extension of the French position had this effect, that the Republicans, after a feeble resistance, gave way at all points, raised the siege of Charleroi, and fled with a loss of more than 2,000 men across the Sambre. For the third time this river had been the scene of an obstinate struggle, and always with the same result: the Emperor Francis now closed his career in the field, in order to devote himself to political cares at Vienna. He could not even now bring himself to confess to his generals the real reason of his departure. He wrote to Coburg that it was not necessary to give him special rules of conduct, since he was well acquainted with the circumstances of the war, the position of the army, and the condition of the men; that he was to look above all things to the preservation of the troops, and the maintenance of discipline. The retreat was not yet c ficially proclaimed, but the object of the Emperor's chief interest was declared to be, not the defence of the country, but the preservation of the troops.

Such was the state of affairs in Belgium at the beginning of June. Men were familiarised with the idea that that country was untenable, and without value to Austria. The Austrians sought to avoid any further battles as much as possible, and if they did engage in any more serious contests on the Sambre, it was done, not to protect Belgium, but to cover their own retreat. In the face of the facts which now lie before us, it will be impossible to repeat that the excellence of the enemy's generals and troops led to this result. On the contrary, things had been brought to this pass, in the first place, by the overwhelming numbers of the French armies, which presented to the Emperor a prospect, not of rapid and splendid triumphs, but of a purposeless waste of his own best forces; secondly, by the obstinate opposition of the Belgian Estates; and thirdly, and more especially, by the march of the Prussians upon Cracow, which suddenly made the Polish question the focus of all

his desires and efforts. The plans of Carnot, and the military talents of Pichegru, as we have said, contributed little to this result; on the contrary, they would, more than once, have injured their own cause in the highest degree, had not Francis and Coburg been equally zealous in making up for the enemy's mistakes by their own. It was, therefore, a piece of irony, but not an injustice, of fate, that Carnot conceived the first really genial and fertile idea in this campaign, at the moment when the enemy voluntarily retired from the contest; and when Carnot's efforts—which however does not detract from their intrinsic value—were almost superfluous.

Jourdan, as we have before remarked, had received orders, towards the end of April, to move about 18,000 men of the Rhine army into the position formerly held by the Army of the Moselle; and then to bring over 25,000—30,000 men of the latter through the territory of Luxemburg to the Meuse, and make a diversion againt Namur or Liège. This straightforward and zealous officer performed his task with an energy which carried him far beyond the existing plans of the Committee. Whether he surmised that no great activity was to be expected from the Prussian army in the Palatinate, or whether he overlooked this danger in the hope of achieving a more decided success, he resolved to transfer, not 25,000 men as Carnot had ordered, but 50,000 men, from the Moselle to the Meuse. It was not until the 20th of May that he had collected this body of men in Thionville; but he preserved the secret of his expedition with the greatest care, and the troops themselves had no suspicion of his object when he began to move, on the above-mentioned day, from Thionville towards Arlon. "The enemy," he wrote at this time to Carnot, "has retreated from Arlon to Bastogne. I shall follow him thither, and still further, till I force him to a battle." This was General Beaulieu, who had just executed another splendid cavalry manœuvre against the French garrison of Bouillon, but now retreated before a force quadruple his own to Namur, where, as we have seen, he

arrived just in time to take part in the engagement of Charleroi on the 3rd of June. Jourdan, cautiously advancing, reached the Meuse at Dinant on the 30th of May, and there received orders from the Committee of Public Safety, not, as had been originally intended, to march down the stream to Namur,[1] but to unite with the Army of the Ardennes in the siege of Charleroi.[2] Marching towards Thuin according to these directions, he arrived there on the evening of the 3rd of June, in time to receive and protect the fugitives of the defeated Army of the Ardennes. St. Just had just been summoned by the Committee to Paris, to deliberate about the party feuds in the Convention; on his arrival he made a report on the previous ill-fortune of the army, which he ascribed especially to the disagreement between Desjardins and Charbonnier. He thereby secured the dismissal of the latter, but he had still so little expectation of important aid from Jourdan, that he proposed to give the command of the Ardennes army to General Desjardins, not under Jourdan's, but unter Pichegru's orders. But the Committee had before them a very unfavourable judgment of Pichegru on the capacity of General Desjardins; then came the intelligence of the new defeat of the 3rd; Carnot, therefore, sent off a resolution of the Committee to Thuin, on the 4th, which confirmed the junction of the armies, gave to the whole mass of 100,000 men the name of Army of the Sambre and Meuse, and appointed Jourdan to command it, under Pichegru's superintendence.

This was no doubt the wisest measure which the Committee adopted during the whole campaign. At last they made a step out of their former perverse ways, out of the chaos of error and division, and threw an imposing and

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[1] He had this intention as late as the 21st, as Charbonnier informed General Bruce. — [2] Order of the 8th of *Prairial*, printed in the Moniteur of the 14th.

overpowering force on the decisive point of the whole theatre of war. But this single happy idea was not the fruit of clever calculation, or wise thought, or of a new system of tactics: it was rather the offspring of a transient necessity. It came however too late—at a time when Austria had already determined upon the evacuation of Belgium—and it neither made any alteration, when carried into practice, in the prevailing mode of conducting the war—for Jourdan, like his predecessors, adhered to the system of minute columns—nor had it any influence on Carnot's general plan, which still looked to Ostend, Walcheren and London. A closer observation, therefore, cannot but considerably lower the estimate generally formed of it. If it had been adopted four weeks earlier, and carried out with energy, it would in all probability have determined the issue of the campaign in a few days: as it was, however, we can only say that the formation of the Army of the Sambre and Meuse made it impossible for the French rulers, by any fresh mistakes, to keep the Austrians in Belgium, which they were already anxious to leave.

On the 6th, Jourdan came to an agreement with the conventional commissioners in his camp, respecting his future measures. They determined, in the first place, to leave a full third of their forces—35,000 men—on the south of the Sambre, for the protection of the country to the right and left of Maubeuge; against whom, it would be difficult to say—since, after the struggles of the last few weeks in this region, the weakness of their adversaries could not be unknown to the French. They then crossed the Sambre, on the 12th, with 66,000 men, almost without resistance, since Orange, after the last engagement, had led back his main body to the position at Rouveroi. The division Hatry, 8,000 strong, thereupon invested Charleroi, opened its trenches, and began to bombard the place; the other divisions of the army were again drawn up, in three separate masses, over a space of about 19 miles, with brooks, woods and defiles

between them, for the purpose of covering the besiegers. In consequence of this disposition of the French force, Orange, although only half as strong as his adversary, gathered courage for another attempt to relieve the town. He once more designated about 33,000 men for this service, as on the 3rd; he himself approached with three columns from Rouveroi, while Beaulieu, with 11,000 men, advanced from Namur against the right flank of the French —the plan being to attack the enemy's position on all sides, early on the morning of the 16th. Jourdan, being informed of the movements of the enemy, felt all the disadvantage of his extended line, and, on the evening of the 15th, conceived the resolution of anticipating the Austrians by boldly assuming the offensive. The night was extremely dark; at break of day a thick mist spread itself far and wide over the country; the soldiers could not see more than a few steps around them in any direction. Towards three o'clock, at the first dawn, the troops began to move; but about the same time the Austrians also were already advancing; an extremely violent collision took place, and a series of bloody single combats, the progress of which was only known to the leaders from the report of the guns. At first Beaulieu drove General Marceau back to the village of Fleurus, and took the place by storm; in the centre General Latour drove the division Championnet out of the village of Heppignies by a bayonet charge, and prepared to attack Gosselies, the last position before Charleroi. On the west wing, the battle between General Kleber and Wartensleben near Trazegnies and Forchies remained undecided. Meanwhile Jourdan sent the division Lefevre against Fleurus; their approach was concealed from the Austrians by the fog; but suddenly their battalions rushed from the high standing corn against the enemy's infantry, drove them by a murderous fire of artillery out of the place, and continued to advance, in spite of the repeated attempts of the Austrian cavalry to cut them up. At the same time the division

Morlot from Gosselies charged Latour, who, being also cannonaded from Fleurus, began to retreat, at first slowly; but was soon attacked by some French cavalry reserves, under General Dubais, which cut one battalion to pieces, captured seven guns, and drove the Austrians nearly five miles back to Frasne and Mellet. Still more unfavourable for the latter was the battle on the west wing, where Kleber beat the Dutch with great loss out of the village of Trazegnies, and where Wartensleben himself was wounded and obliged to leave the field. It was eight o'clock in the morning, and Jourdan thought that the day was his own. At this moment, however, Orange once more collected all his strength for a last effort. He himself, with the Imperial Generals Alvinzy and Werneck, hastened to Latour, and in the midst of the tumult, and a shower of balls, rallied the wavering column. General Petrasch led a last reserve of grenadiers against Fleurus, and with these picked troops, which stood like a small but impenetrable rampart, he checked the advance of Marceau; so that Orange was enabled to disentangle the division Latour from the fight and lead them over to Beaulieu. A mass of nearly 20,000 men was collected in one spot; the battalions were once more set in order and prepared for the attack; and with their guns collected in batteries at their head, and the band playing up, they once more advanced in double quick time against the enemy. The division Lefevre, which in the heat of the advance had fired away all its powder, was scattered at once by the shock of the advancing Austrians; Marceau was compelled to make a hasty retreat, and the village of Lambusart, the *point d'appui* of the French right on the Sambre, was captured. It was now mid-day, the sun at last broke through the fog, and suddenly opened the prospect of the surrounding country; Jourdan, who was stationed on the heights of Jumet, between Charleroi and Gosselies, saw his right wing in disorderly flight towards the nearest bridges, and the Austrians advancing up the stream from Lambusart,

and already threatening the rear of his centre. He immediately summoned Morlot and Championnet from Melet and Gosselies to the hills of Jumet; but scarcely had they taken up their position there, when Werneck and Beaulieu were upon them, and by a last charge compelled these divisions also to a hasty retreat across the Sambre. Hatry followed without an attempt at resistance, and towards five o'clock in the evening Charleroi was relieved. General Kleber alone, who commanded the French left, had maintained his superiority, driven the Dutch out of every new position, and chased them for nine miles into the country as far as Roculx. But after Jourdan's retreat these successes were of no avail; Kleber could not think of holding his ground alone upon the northern bank.

The victors had good reason to be contented with their day's work. With the blood of about 3,000 comrades they had achieved the glory of driving back, for the fourth time, an enormously superior force over the hardly contested river; they imagined that now, since the Moselle army also had felt the weight of their arm, they should have rest for a long time to come; and Orange did not scruple, on the 17th, to send off four battalions to Tournay to reinforce Coburg. But he over-estimated his success. The French, who had nowhere suffered severely but at Fleurus, were soon restored to order on the other side of the Sambre; and Jourdan was entirely of the same opinion with St. Just, who had lately returned from Paris, that a fresh attempt to cross the river should be made without delay. Whereupon Orange sent off courier after courier to recall the detached battalions, and even to beg Coburg for reinforcements. For the present, however, he avoided a fresh engagement, and allowed Jourdan to invest Charleroi again, and extend his line after the old fashion from Trazegnies to Gosselies, and thence to Fleurus and Lambusart. In spite of his superior numbers the French general was by no means at ease on this blood-stained ground; he therefore buried his troops in

deep intrenchments, cut down the woods, and fortified the villages. Meanwhile he learned from the inhabitants of the neighbourhood that the Austrians were no where to be seen in any considerable strength; this information seemed to be confirmed by a grand reconnoitring movement of the French up the river, on the 20th, with 40,000 men, since Orange without firing a shot, continually retreated before them. Such a course on the part of the Austrians was so unusual, that, though it was natural to suppose that Orange only declined battle because he was expecting reinforcements, St. Just—who agreed with the Committee in regarding Flanders as the only important theatre of war—began to fear that the enemy might be concentrating his forces in that country for a decisive blow against Pichegru. Carnot had just sent off instructions to Pichegru, on the 18th, to transfer 16,000 men from the Sambre to the coast of Flanders;[1] and it was entirely in accordance with similar views, that St. Just now ordered General Kleber to leave the camp on the Sambre with 36,000 men, march to Mons, and there threaten the Austrians in their position on the Scheldt. As Coburg arrived on the very same day in the camp of Orange at Nivelles, Kleber, by obeying St. Just's instructions, would have been completely isolated, and exposed to the united forces of the allies; and if he should be defeated, Jourdan with the rest of the army would be in the greatest peril. But St. Just had not the slightest idea of any such contingencies; he listened to the tales of Austrian deserters and Belgian patriots, about the wretched condition of the enemy's troops, and of the terror which prevailed in Belgium, indulged in the most splendid dreams of victory; and wrote to the Committee that the young man

[1] From *Jourdan's Memoires* quoted by Louis Blanc XI, 164, who however makes the mistake of seeing in these instructions a subject of disagreement between Carnot and St. Just.

whom the good fortune of the Republic had made German Emperor, could not resist much longer, and would perish miserably, if the contest were only kept up with impetuous energy. He considered all danger on the Sambre as completely past, and refused, with insolent pride, to listen to Jourdan's protests against the sending away of Kleber. Whereupon Jourdan openly declared that he would not obey the order, but would appeal to the Committee of Public Safety. St. Just, who had just caused an artillery officer to be executed, because his battery was not ready for action at the appointed hour, was furious at the insubordination of the general; but before he could make up his mind how to act, intelligence arrived from Cambray, Câteau, and Maubeuge, that the Austrian corps were every where marching towards Charleroi; and Kleber's outposts were alarmed, for the first time, on the 25th, after a pause of eight days. It was evident that a new attempt to relieve the town was to be made, and Jourdan's resistance was brilliantly justified.[1] The bombardment of Charleroi was now continued with increased vigour, and with so much effect, that the commandant sent an officer in the course of the forenoon to negotiate terms of capitulation. The fate of the French army might have depended on an immediate settlement, but St. Just adhered to his usual style of bombastic bragging, refused all discussion, and threatened a general massacre, unless the gates were opened, and the town surrendered at discretion, before evening. He even forgot to inform Kleber of the position of affairs, so that the general, who was on the point of attacking the ad-

[1] According to the papers in the military archives, St. Just, at the time of his fall, attributed his own error to General Jourdan, and this view of the case was adopted in Buchez's work, from which it has been transferred to other accounts.

vancing Austrians, was only restrained, by the hasty intervention of Jourdan, from an engagement, the noise of which would have apprised the garrison of the approach of relief, and hindered the surrender.[1] The commandant laid down his arms in the evening, and the French thus gained a firm basis of operations on the bank of the river, and were able to bring up Hatry's division for the impending battle, and to await with a force of 76,000 men the onset of the Austrians.

The Allies, even after Coburg's arrival, had only two-thirds of that number. Nor was the quality of these troops the same as in the commencement of the campaign; the best men had been decimated in many a bloody battle, and the great mass were dispirited by the report of the impending retreat. Yet there was not one of them who would not have gone into battle with calm confidence; and the dispersion of the hostile forces afforded, even now, the chance of a second victory, provided that the Allies kept well together, and brought an overwhelming force to bear upon one of the enemy's wings. By this mode of proceeding, not only would the road to Charleroi have been opened, but the French would have been threatened in their communications, and compelled to retreat beyond the river. Coburg, however, who had no intelligence of the fall of Charleroi, followed the same tactics as Orange had employed ten days before. Occupying the attention of the enemy's centre by pushing forward fifteen battalions (11,000 men), in two columns, he sent the Princes of Orange and Waldeck against the left wing, under Kleber—and Beaulieu and the Archduke Charles (who were seven or eight miles off) against the right, commanded by Marceau and Mayer, near Fleurus and Lambusart. The fate of the day, therefore, as will be seen at once, depended entirely on the result of the first

[1] Soult's *Mémoires.*

collision. If Marceau or Kleber were not immediately and entirely broken, if they were only driven back towards Charleroi, they would but strengthen the position of the French by their very retreat. Every retrograde step would remedy the chief fault of their position—its excessive extension; their divisions would approach one another, afford mutual support, and derive the full advantage from their superior numbers. And this was just the course which events took on the 26th.

The battle was commenced before daybreak by the Prince of Orange, who threw himself, soon after one o'clock, on Kleber's van (Montaigu's division) which was posted close to the Sambre, at Vespe. The blow was dealt with such force, that the French, after a short resistance, took to flight, and sought for safety on the other side of the river. Hereupon Waldeck, at about four o'clock, opened the attack upon Kleber himself; a violent artillery contest arose, Trazegnies was taken by a bayonet charge, the enemy driven out of the woods of Monceaux, and, about nine o'clock, the village of Marchienne on the Sambre—only a quarter of a league from Charleroi—was taken by storm. But Kleber now hastened in person to General Morlot, who commanded the nearest division of the centre, borrowed some of his battalions, and made a furious attack on Waldeck. At the same time Jourdan sent the cavalry reserve, under General Dubois, against the flank of the Austrians, and a howitzer battery came up from Gosselies, and shelled the woods of Monceaux; in short, though the Allies maintained the ground which they had won, all further advance on their part was simply impossible.

A similar fate meanwhile befell General Beaulieu, at the opposite end of the line of battle, in his attack on the enemy's right wing. Beaulieu established himself firmly in the wooded banks of the Sambre, during an obstinate contest between the skirmishers of either party. The French

contested every inch of ground from behind their stockades, and the Imperialists suffered severely as they advanced. It was twelve o'clock before they had driven the enemy from their cover in the woods; whereupon General Marceau collected his division before the village of Lambusart, and received the pursuing Austrians with a murderous fire from twenty guns. Yet the latter, though whole lines of their men were being mown down, dashed forward with the bayonet, and with loud hurrahs put the enemy to flight. It was in vain that Marceau threw himself into the midst of the tumult, and endeavoured to rally his men; his horse was shot under him, and he himself narrowly escaped capture; the great mass of his division, hotly pursued by the Austrian cuirassiers, fled beyond the Sambre. Unfortunately the Archduke had hitherto vainly attempted to drive the French out of Fleurus; Beaulieu, therefore, was obliged to halt, and Jourdan gained time to send off General Lefevre, from the centre, with several battalions to Lambusart, and thus to afford a *point d'appui* to his hardly-pressed right wing. Meanwhile the Archduke at last took Fleurus, and formed a conjunction with Beaulieu; the two generals then advanced amidst a heavy fire of artillery to what they hoped was the decisive attack upon Lambusart. Thrice did their columns force their way into the place, and thrice were they driven back; at length Lefevre left the smoking ruins in the hands of the victors, and withdrew to his fortified camp behind the village, where Hatry's division arrived soon afterwards, and threatened the exhausted Austrians with an entirely new contest.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon. The bloody struggle had been carried on for twelve hours without decided advantage to either side, and the day was to be looked on as already lost for the Allies, for the simple reason that it had not long ago been won. Even if the enfeebled troops, by a fresh miracle of bravery, should achieve a new victory

at Marchienne or Lambusart, their losses would be fearful, and they could expect nothing but total annihilation, as soon as fortune, which they had so boldly challenged, should desert them at any single point. Coburg was evidently in no position to continue so hazardous a game, since, as we know, he was fighting, not to hold possession of the country, but to abandon it with as little loss as possible. Just at this moment intelligence was brought by Lieutenant Radetzky—subsequently the famous Field-marshal, who with six horsemen had swum the Sambre, and stolen through the enemy's division up to the walls of the fortress—that Charleroi had already been twenty-four hours in the hands of the French; whereupon Coburg immediately determined to break off the contest. His columns retreated in excellent order, Beaulieu even taking with him some captured guns; and the French had suffered too much to think of harassing the retreating enemy. Kleber alone made some attempts against Waldeck, whose column was the last to leave the battle-field, but he was unable to gain any important advantage. Yet the French had on this day attained the long desired object of fixing themselves on the north of the Sambre; and though their soldiers had gained but little glory, their General reaped the greatest advantages from the battle of Fleurus.

To what degree this engagement would affect the issue of the whole war still depended in a great degree on the future measures of the Prince of Coburg. His army was by no means beaten, his troops, on the contrary, were filled with the consciousness of their strength. If he resolved to leave the road to Brussels apparently open to the French, and to lead his whole army to Namur, he might, in the course of a few weeks, draw reinforcements from Luxemburg and Trèves, and raise the number of his troops to 60,000 men. By this means he would protect his communications with Germany, and keep Jourdan in check on this side, perhaps

for months, as he had before done General Pichegru, at Tournay, in an exactly similar position. If he took this course he must, indeed, witness the levying of a forced contribution on Brussels by a detachment of the enemy with indifference, but regard every important movement of Jourdan towards the north, as a signal for an energetic advance on his own part. Such a mode of carrying on the war, however, lay entirely beyond his mental horizon. He therefore adopted the exactly opposite system, of covering all the roads by scanty posts, which were instructed to retreat at the first serious onset of the enemy. He caused his different divisions to retreat by the same road by which they had advanced to battle—Beaulieu towards the east to Gembloux to protect Namur—the centre, northwards, towards Brussels as far as Genappes—and Orange, westwards, as far as Roeulx in the neighbourhood of Mons. He hereby dispersed his forces in thin bodies of 12,000 to 15,000 men each, over an extent of more than 28 miles, in the face of a pursuing enemy, who, within twenty-four hours, could have collected an army of more than 100,000 men. If we consider, moreover, that the Duke of York, at the same time, scattered his still weaker force in a still weaker line, from Tournay to Helvoetsluys, it becomes evident that the fate of the Allies was placed by these measures entirely in the hands of the French. How many would have escaped, if Jourdan, on the 27th, had marched with 90,000 men to Namur and Liège to bar their retreat, and Pichegru at the same time, with an equal force, had crossed the Scheldt—at Oudenarde for instance—thereby separating York and Clerfait, and then continued his course unchecked, in Coburg's rear, towards Brussels?

But the revolutionary system of war repaid the Allies at this decisive moment for the advantages which their errors had so often conferred on the French. However much Coburg might do to thrust the booty into the hands of the French,

the latter were just as obstinate in refusing to seize it. On the 27th Jourdan wrote to Carnot, that he now saw two courses before him, either to drive the enemy from the neighbourhood of Maubeuge, or to besiege Namur, which latter would indeed afford greater advantages, but would also be far more difficult. He therefore begged the Committee to declare which of the two would best suit their general plans. We see that he had no idea of the laurels which fate was offering him in such rare abundance; and the Committee, on its part, by no means felt itself obliged to diverge, in any respect, from their once adopted scheme. They still adhered to the idea of employing their main force against the Maritime Powers, and consequently directed their march to Flanders, towards the west and the sea-coast. It is true that affairs in Belgium had assumed such an aspect, as should have impelled both the French armies towards the east, and promised the greatest results from an energetic movement in this direction. The Brest fleet indeed, in its first attempt to run out, had been terribly cut up by the English at Quessant, and had returned to the harbour with the loss of 7 ships and 8,000 men; so that no reasonable man could any longer meditate a landing in England. But the wish still existed in the minds of French politicians, to spare Austria and intimidate England; and this inclination, as far as we can see, decided the military measures of the Committee of Public Safety.

Pichegru, with a perfectly correct view of the position of affairs, was already beginning to move towards Oudenarde; but he immediately received categorical instructions from Carnot, that the time was come to sever the last thread which united Austria and England, by the capture of Ostend. He was therefore ordered to occupy all west Flanders, and to make himself master of some point in that country from which he could pay the English a visit in their own home: "For," added Carnot, "the Government has by no means

given up the plan of a landing in England." In case the number of vessels for the undertaking should not yet be sufficient, Pichegru was, at all events, to undertake a smaller preliminary expedition against the Dutch island of Walcheren, to hold a force of at least 16,000 men in readiness for this purpose, and arrange all his other operations with a view to its support.

Pichegru hereupon broke off the attack, which he had already commenced, on Oudenarde, and collected the greater part of his forces at Bruges, which city had been occupied by Moreau on the 26th of June. Jourdan received analogous instructions on the 29th. He was not to undertake any important operations either towards the east or west, but to accommodate himself completely to Coburg's system of little columns and slow retreat. Like Coburg he was to send off one corps to the right towards Namur, and another to the left towards Mons, and follow the enemy's centre with his main body towards Brussels. As a climax to these futile and paralysing proceedings, the Committee of Public Safety decreed lastly, on the 4th of July, that both armies should send back several divisions, to besiege the four fortresses which had been taken from the French; that, until these had been recovered, the French generals should abstain from all important offensive operations, and content themselves with driving back the Allies beyond a line drawn from Antwerp to Namur.[1]

There is not, as far as we know, a single competent authority who has hesitated for a moment in his judgment

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[1] To this was added a decree of the Convention, that every garrison, which did not capitulate within twenty-four hours after the first summons, should be put to the sword. This was a mere revolutionary phrase made use of to the enemy, and was never fully carried out; the real significance of the decree will be seen below, when we come to consider the party-struggles in France.

of these proceedings. It will suffice to mention the French officers who have subjected the campaign of 1794 to professional criticism. Servan, Jomini, Jourdan and Soult, are unanimous in their condemnation of the orders above mentioned, and the matter appears to speak for itself in the clearest manner. Let us picture to ourselves the new disposition of the French forces: Pichegru, with his 100,000 men, wasting his time in useless marches on the sea-coast; and Jourdan's army, cut up into three divisions of 30,000 men each, separated by long miles from one another. Nothing but his own will could prevent the enemy from uniting a force of 60,000 men between these corps, overpowering Jourdan's centre by a sudden attack, and thereby driving the two isolated wings for the fifth time across the Sambre. Such an effort would have been by no means too much to ask of the Allied army, for we have seen that it was far from being defeated at Fleurus, and its internal organisation remained entirely uninjured. The officers, indeed, manifested, since the departure of the Emperor, a strong disinclination to any further useless toil, as they called it;[1] but the soldiers, though no longer enthusiastic, were in every respect ready for battle. It is clear how thoroughly such a revolution in affairs on the Sambre would have reacted upon Pichegru's eagerness to invade Flanders; and how effectually it would have checked the advance of the French along the whole border. This view of the matter was not without its advocates at the head-quarters of the Allies, and a great Council of war, presided over by Coburg, once more resolved, on the 1st of July, to defend Belgium to the uttermost,[2] and with this view to employ a strong force, in the first

[1] York to Dundas June 28.

[2] On this occasion Orange and York put the straight-forward question to the Imperial generals, whether Austria intended to evacuate the Netherlands, and received from them the distinct, and doubtless true, reply, that they had had no instruc-

place, to attack Jourdan's right wing, and to protect the town of Mons. But, on the same day, Ferrand drove the Prince of Orange out of Mons; on the 5th, therefore, a second council of war decreed that further resistance was impossible, and that Brussels must be evacuated on the 7th. The inhabitants of this city had been trembling for weeks at the fate which awaited them. Every one remembered the conduct of the French in the preceding year, and looked for still worse things under the rule of Robespierre; all who had anything to lose endeavoured at the last moment to escape. It was just the same in Ghent, Antwerp, Louvain, and Namur. The nobles fled without exception, most of the prelates followed them, and manufacturers and merchants conveyed their property to a place of safety. Half the shops in Brussels were empty, and the fugitives, in great companies, crowded along the high roads between the bodies of troops; the number of these voluntary exiles was reckoned at more than 200,000. The Belgian government had already transferred its seat, on the 3d of July, from Brussels to Malines, and had exasperated the citizens, before its departure, by a fruitless attempt to carry off the deposits in the civic treasury. From Malines they proceeded, on the 9th, to Diest; thence to Ruremonde and Düsseldorf, followed by the majority of the officials. All the bands of society and government were broken.[1] Meanwhile the fatal news was carried to the head-quarters of the Duke of York, and excited no less commotion there than among the population

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ions to leave the Netherlands, or to make a precipitate retreat. It is a sign of the degree of sagacity with which Vivenot's book has been composed, that the Author considers that he has, in the answer of the Austrian generals, a convincing proof that Thugut never aimed at the evacuation of Belgium!

[1] Correspondence between Count Trautmannsdorf and State Secretary Müller in the archives at Brussels.

of Belgium. The Duke, indeed, ever since the disasters of Tournay, had anticipated such a termination; but during the first contests on the Sambre, he had forgotten this and many other cares, in shortsighted thoughtlessness, and the daily recuring pleasures of the table. Now, however, he was beside himself with rage. He learned from the Prince of Coburg that Generals Beaulieu and Quosdanovich had been attacked on the 6th by 30,000 French, and that, though they had repulsed the enemy, a retreat to Tirlemont was considered indispensable. "The times are past then," the Duke replied, "when, on receiving intelligence of the approach of a French crowd of double our numbers, no other question was asked than about the place where we should meet them. This retreat to Tirlemont will be continued to Maestricht, and be attended by worse consequences than a defeat; to speak plainly, your Serene Highness, the British nation, whose public opinion is not to be despised, cannot but consider that we have been betrayed and sold." He then appealed to the Archduke Charles, expressing the same convictions, and begged him to reflect on the condition of the provinces of which he (Charles) was Stadtholder General, and with a strong hand to break through the miserable web of falsehood and meanness in which they were all entangled. Coburg's reply is not extant; but the Archduke replied that if he had to follow his own inclinations, he should not waver in his resolution for a single moment; but that he was entirely ignorant of the political state of affairs, and had received the most positive directions from the Emperor to act solely as a soldier, in his capacity of General of the Ordnance. "It seems only too true," he added, in conclusion, "that we have been betrayed and sold; but if you have any positive proofs of treachery in your hands, I beg that you will not communicate them to me, but send them to the Emperor."

Under these circumstances no course was left open for

York's weak army than a hasty retreat. Coburg came to an agreement with the Duke to occupy, in the first instance, a line behind the Dyle, from Antwerp, though Louvain and Gembloux, to Namur. But he had no serious intention of keeping to his engagement. The troops, after a feeble resistance, retreated as soon as the French appeared. Coburg gave orders for the evacuation of Namur, and initiated his complete separation from York, by uniting Clerfait with the main body, and sending the Prince of Orange to the English in his stead. On the 11th of July, Jourdan entered Brussels amidst a dead silence on the part of the citizens, and was soon followed by Pichegru with two divisions of the Army of the North. On the 12th, the latter advanced against the Dutch and Hessians stationed in Malines, and took possession of the place, on the 15th, after an irresolute attack, and a half-hearted defence. At the same time Kleber led the left of the Sambre army against Louvain, which the Austrians abandoned, after a short engagement, and retreated to Tirlemont. The definitive separation of York and Coburg was thus formally declared. The former with his English and Dutch troops, and his German mercenaries, moved slowly towards the North,—without being in any degree harassed by Pichegru—with the intention of protecting the Dutch frontier between the Scheldt and Herzogenbusch. The latter, with his Austrian forces, retreated with equal deliberation, only occasionally molested in his rear by Jourdan, to the East, and took up a position on the Meuse between Ruremonde, Maestricht and Liege. If the French were under an obligation to the Imperial head-quarters for the resolution they had taken to retreat, the latter were now repaid by the comparative ease and comfort with which they were allowed to carry out their purpose. For since the fatal Council of war on the 5th, the demoralisation of the Austrian army had become complete. The officers spoke without reserve of Coburg's

incapacity, and the worthlessness of Belgium to the Austrian monarchy; and the soldiers openly complained of insufficient rations, and the disgrace which had befallen their arms. The sudden change in affairs brought the military administration everywhere to a standstill; and the despair which prevailed in every quarter manifested itself in the general loosening of the bands of discipline, and the loss of all military qualities. [1]

Meanwhile the above-mentioned movements had been completed. There was a general cessation of arms; and Belgium was in the hands of the French, whom fortune also favoured in other theatres of the war. In May, Carnot had succeeded,—very much against the wishes of Robespierre—in procuring the recall of the equally brutal and incapable Turreau from La Vendée, and thereby effecting an entire change in the system of warfare, and securing the adoption of wiser and more conciliatory measures. The immediate consequence was a considerable decrease in the insurgent forces, so that the French government was able to send off 5,000 of the 80,000 men who composed the Army of the West, to the Pyrenees, and 20,000 to the Rhine, against the foreign enemy. Soon afterwards Generals Michaud and Moreau succeeded, after many a hard struggle, in driving the Prussians from their position in the Hardt mountains—which they had taken up in May—and capturing Kaiserslautern, Neustadt, and Spires. In the Eastern Pyrences Dugommier drove the the Spaniards and Portuguese from the French border fortresses, which they had hitherto held; and on the Western extremity of the range, Moncey stormed the enemy's lines at Fuentarabia and Ernani, and even made a victorious advance into the Spanish territory.

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[1] Report from head-quarters to the Emperor (Coburg's papers.) Reports of the English officers Crawfurd and Calvert.

In Italy, however, the progress of the French was far less splendid. Soon after their already mentioned successes in the Genoese territory, the Army of the Alps also began to operate, and stormed, first the passes of the little St. Bernard, then those of Mont Cenis, and lastly, the pass of the Barricades. It now, therefore, stood, like the Army of the South, on the ridge of the mountains, ready, as it seemed, to descend upon Turin from all quarters. But just at this moment, the Sardinian Government, by a happy accident, discovered the plot which was fermenting in their capital. The treaty of Valenciennes brought some Austrian troops into the field, and after July the state of things became as quiet and peaceful in Turin, as four weeks afterwards in the Netherlands. We cannot well doubt that in this field, too, the approximation of French and Austrian policy had its effect on the course of the war. Manfredini had already returned to Florence, and at his instigation the Archduke sent the Chevalier Carletti—of all his diplomatists the most favourable to the French—to Genoa, to take the first steps towards a better understanding between France and Tuscany. But the more eagerly the nearest kinsman of the Emperor entered into Thugut's peace-policy, the less inclination did the mightiest of Austria's allies manifest to adopt that Minister's views. About the middle of June, England answered the mission of Montgaillard by a decree of the notables in Corsica, proclaiming George III. king of that island, which had just been occupied by the English. The effect of this step was equally bad in Madrid, Genoa and Florence; the secretly growing inclination towards France was fostered by the jealousy of England's maritime power. It caused vexation even in Vienna. It was reported that Pitt had met the offers of Montgaillard by a counter-proposition, to the effect that if France would acknowledge the sovereignty of Eng-

land over the conquered islands, she might keep Belgium for herself. It was not true, and it is not likely that Thugut himself believed it, but the mere existence of such a rumour in Vienna plainly showed, that, at this moment, Thugut regarded Robespierre with more friendly feelings than Pitt.

END OF VOL. III.

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